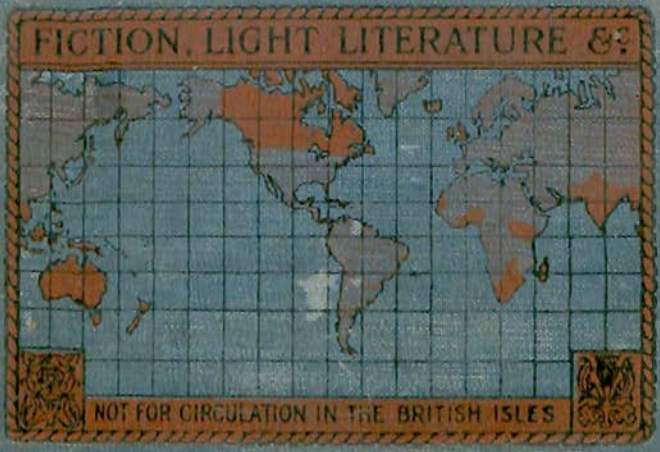
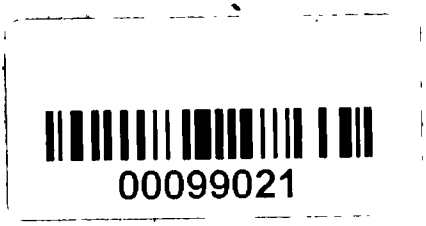
MURRAY'S IMPERIAL LIBRARY



00099021



Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018

THE LIFE OF PARIS

THE LIFE OF PARIS

BY RICHARD WHITEING

AUTHOR OF "NO. 5 JOHN STREET," "THE ISLAND," ETC.

99021

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

NN-t-24

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1900

99021

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	THE GOVERNMENTAL MACHINE . . .	1
II.	PARISIAN PASTIMES	53
III.	ARTISTIC PARIS	95
IV.	PARIS OF THE FAUBOURGS . . .	137
V.	LIFE ON THE BOULEVARD . . .	179
VI.	FASHIONABLE PARIS	225

I.

THE GOVERNMENTAL MACHINE

THE LIFE OF PARIS

I.

THE GOVERNMENTAL MACHINE

A HOT August afternoon, and the cage slowly mounts with a handful of travellers to the top of the Eiffel Tower. We are not at all sightseers; at any rate, I can answer for one. The Paris plain is so hot that the ascent is, with me, a last despairing effort for a mouthful of air. It has unexpected advantages now that I am on the move. I see Paris as I have never seen it before. There is the Exhibition Building of 1900, soon to vanish in all its glory. The monstrous litter of its ruin will again fill all the Champ de Mars and line the Seine

on both banks, far beyond the esplanade of the Invalides—a perspective with no terminal point. Paris is once more to be torn down. Were there a speaking-trumpet at hand one would fain cry to the pigmies below, "Why can't you let well-enough alone?" This mood lasts until we reach the summit, when there is abundant evidence that they set up faster than they lay low. The civil power gains something from the military in every change in the Champ de Mars. It is an emblem of the things that are to be. So the saving power is once more in the constructive activities of this marvellous race. They have wiped out their capital a dozen times, and every time have left something better in its place. The legacy of the last Exhibition was the permanent Museum of the Trocadéro. One legacy of this transformation is the Czar's Bridge—among the finest things of its kind in the world. At this rate, the Seine will soon be an aquatic tunnel; but it is pleasant for those who are in the free air.

The bridge does you the service of taking

the view from the Exhibition, which is, after all, only a secondary affair, to Paris itself. There is the everlasting spectacle, more grandiose to-day than ever. From this elevation the city is manifestly outgrowing its mere walls, as a healthy boy outgrows last year's jacket. But for these walls, Paris might enter into hopeful competition with London for primacy among the largest cities of the world. It stretches away in unbroken lines of milk-white masonry at every point. The inner circle, as one may already call the space within the fortifications, has yet an innermost ring—the Paris of the foreigner. This Tartar city may easily be traced from our present elevation, by taking the Round Point as its centre and the Arch as its circumference. Here are all the braveries of the fair for the happy few from many parts of the world—a multitude in their aggregate. The British are an ever-diminishing colony; London is now their capital of pleasure for the whole empire. Good Americans have a tendency to look for their earthly paradise in the same

quarter, consistently enough, for the site of that region is notoriously a speculative point. But the "balance" of mankind still seeks its cosmopolis here. Wealthy planters and traders from the four seas, *rastaquouères** from South America, the pick of the Continental aristocracies, all flock this way in the season, and where they fail the French of the same category are quite ready to supply their place.

But, after all, these do not make Paris or the wealth of Paris. The city quite suffices to itself, with the good help of France in the background. It knows as much, and for years past has marked its sense of the fact by a certain want of deference to the outlander. Paris is one of the greatest manufacturing cities of France. Its industries are on the colossal scale. It is a huge exporter, not only of the articles that bear its name, the "Yankee notions" of taste for the bazaars of the world, but of all the wares

* "Foreign adventurer or swindler, generally hailing from the Sunny South or from South America."—A. BARRÈRE.

of the market-place. So it has its own life, and that life lies far beyond the straggling band of fire which is to be traced every night in the Champs-Elysées and the boulevards. To my thinking, it is best seen in its own labour quarters. If we were on the hill of Montmartre, instead of on this tower, we should find Paris at home. But, after all, we have it at home in Montparnasse, not far from our feet. Here are the people in their habit as they live, and in their ways, untainted by the desire to please any but themselves.

The real problem at issue in all this prodigious activity is, Can an old people make itself young again? It is almost answered in its terms. Yet the hope is so fascinating that it tempts to new experiments again and again. Japan began it the other day, and is still encouraged or deluded with the belief that it is renewing its youth. The French began more than a hundred years ago, when they were still most ancient of days—of the moderns, unquestionably, the oldest folk in Europe. They were a polity

and a civilisation when the English analogue of the man in the street was Gurth the swineherd, and when Italy had for the moment crumbled back into the animate dust of the races out of which Rome was made. Oh, how old they are! It flashes on you without preoccupation and without warning in modern Paris, as well as in the remote provinces. The wrinkles show in the majestic delays of their bureaucracy, in a thousand medievalisms of their ways of thought. I will not say they show under the paint, for that would do injustice to my meaning in doing injustice to them. It is an honest attempt to effect the change by the diet of ideas and by the regimen of institutions. In the Revolution they were for doing away with the old Adam in a day and a night. It was the most prodigious day and night in all history; but, when it was past, the would-be stripling sat down and wiped his still furrowed brow, and relapsed into the habits of age—into aristocracy—with the Empire, into limited suffrages, into the theory of statehood as

mere organised conquest. The new effort came with the downfall of the third Napoleon, a catastrophe brought about solely by the failure of his system to serve the old military ideals. It is going on to-day. The problem is still unsolved. Is it better for a nation, as for an individual, to accept the inevitable, to take itself frankly at its actual count of years, and to make the best of it? Is there anything more to strive for than a mere artful prolongation of forces which are still necessarily on the decline?

I have sometimes had a curious fancy that these ages of nations might be fixed by a sort of typical correspondence with the ages of individual man. In this view England has turned sixty, but is still hale, hearty, and well-preserved, still better equipped for a day on the moors of empire than many a youngster of them all, yet still within measurable distance of an allotted span. Poor Spain, as we have seen, is as rusty in the joints as her national hero of romance, and has manifestly entered into her dismal inheritance of labour and sorrow.

So has Italy. The Columbia we love to hail is in her very prime, and therefore past her period of first youth. She has lost some of her illusions, for she lives fast. She will be thirty next birthday—I hope I am not indiscreet. Russia is younger, in spite of the chronologies, and the shock-headed young giant has not yet attained to the proper combing of his hair. Germany is five-and-forty, if a day, but amazingly well-preserved, thanks to an elaborate chamber gymnastic, the results of which have yet to be tested in the field-work of the world. France—well, it is an ungracious exercise of fancy at the best, and I leave it an open question, as I am at this moment in her presence. Sometimes you hesitate to give her a day over twenty. Then comes an *affaire*, or some other disenchantment, and you are sure she will never see ninety again, and that, do what she may, she can never shake off the enemy as he creeps on with his fateful burden of old habits, old ways of life and thought.

But the activity, the mere civic and in-

dustrial energy is prodigious. You return every few years to find a new city. The boasted Paris of the Empire was a village compared with the Paris I see, as in panorama, to-day. The houses are more like palaces than ever they were before. "They cut the Pentelican marble as if it were snow," says Emerson of his Greeks. So the Parisian *sculpteur en bâtiment* cuts the softer stone of the Normandy quarries. The Empire is nothing to the Republic in the count of new avenues, of new public works of every kind. The perpetual advance of mere splendour and luxury, for what it is worth, may be traced in the Champs-Elysées. There are still left one or two quaint plaster-fronted houses, which represent the modest ideals of the time of Louis Philippe. Hard by, in any number, are the stone fronts of the Empire, and, rapidly replacing these, the Cyclopean masses in which the modern millionaire swaggers in his pride—a perfect riot of carving in their rather gaudy fronts. Naturalistic infants disport themselves over all the vast façade of the new Palace Hotel,

with other figures that may charitably be regarded as their mammas. It is not exactly in good taste, but, with its still inalienable "quality," what foreign city might not be glad to have half of its complaint of bad? Those white patches in the distance, beyond the walls, are buildings only less superb and less opulent. The mere movement of human beings is amazing. While waiting for a complete metropolitan railway system, Paris travels by automobile and by huge two-decker street-trains, drawn by locomotives, which quite destroy the amenities of the interior scene. The old peaceful cross-roads near the Printemps are a terror, what with trumpeting engines, broughams, cycles, *chars-à-bancs*, all driven by steam or electricity. The tramways here, as elsewhere, are destroying the streets, and the light fiacres bob and dance about over the tormented surface like dinghies in a gale.

I do not say that it is edifying; still less do I call it delightful. I cite it only in proof of the intensity of the movement. Those who find their account in mere rush and

hurry should be in paradise here. The horse will soon have the air of a survival; the motor, for every kind of street use, is becoming a matter of course. In this invention England, and even America, have been left far behind. The pace is fearful, the accidents are fearful, but, such as they are, the administration seems to be thankful for them as a safety-valve for the energies that might otherwise have an explosive force in politics. It is a race to the devil that threatens the individual only, and not the state. For good or ill the giant city is all alive at every point. Everything seems to be rebuilding or rebuilt. The Saint-Lazare station is new; the Gare de Lyon is newer still. The Orléans line has pushed its way into town by a stupendous settlement that is to occupy the entire site of the Cour des Comptes, burned under the Commune. The whole square of the Invalides is to be undermined by another huge structure of the same sort. This is for Paris only; and, to scale, much the same thing is going on all over the territory in ports, harbours, branch railways, and vicinal roads.

It is a rage of renewal. France will be young again if she dies for it. The mere growth is beyond question. If we could peer through the roofs from here, we should see a working population of nearly a million and a half, which forms only a part of the total population of "all souls." It is one of the greatest manufacturing cities, as well as the greatest city of pleasure on the planet. Ninety-six thousand of these workers—Lilliputian from the level—would be found in the tailoring and dressmaking trades, helping to clothe the universe, and to make good Victor Hugo's boast, "I defy you to wear a bonnet that is not of Paris fashion or of Paris make." One hundred and twelve thousand are in metals, precious or otherwise. Over forty-four thousand of the wondrous pigmies would be hard at it in the book and printing trades; they were but twenty-seven thousand a dozen years ago. I could go on, with the help of a jubilant return lately issued by the Office of Labour, but I generously forbear.

So this may serve to prepare the way for my paradox, that the French are really the

most serious and purposeful folk in the world —a great, sad race too, with a pessimistic bitter for the subflavour of their national gaiety, as it is the subflavour of their absinthe. They put on their high spirits as a garment, and, like the *Figaro* of their ideal, they laugh lest they should be obliged to weep. "Our lively neighbour," "the light-hearted Gaul"—what thoughtless locutions are these! Our Gauls are a gloomy and a brooding swarm, ever haunted with the fear of being left behind in the race of life, their clear, keen intellect marred and thwarted by wretched nerves. It is the artistic temperament with its penalty. With those nerves there is no answering for their best-laid schemes. They start at shadows, and, once started in suspicion, rage, or hate, they have the desperation of the bolting horse. They bolted under the Revolution, in spite of the warning entreaties of Jefferson, who tried to show them how they might run a profitable course to constitutional reform. They are not always bolting, be it well understood. They have long and blessed intervals of

national self-possession, ease, and grace, when butter would hardly melt in their mouths. But Mme. France is *journalière*, rising without any volition of her own in the humour that is to rule the day. When she comes down in the morning with one of her headaches, her nearest and dearest had better find an excuse for getting out of the way. The personification, however, is scarcely felicitous. In point of temperament the men here are the women, and the women the men. The quiet, laborious, cool-headed housewife runs France. The secret of the malady is nature's; the secret of the cure is the people's own. There is none other so ploddingly, so remorselessly industrious. After every outbreak France picks up the pieces, and out of the ruin wrought by the paroxysm makes something finer than before. The fatal war was an attack of nerves. The Jew-baiting is another, and it may be described as a desperate attempt to reconcile Panama to national self-respect. The awful "affaire" is a third on the same lines. Each attack

has been intensified by the new régime of liberty—still new, though it is nearly as old as the constitution of the present Republic. Freedom as a habit is the growth of centuries, and these recently converted sinners of despotism are still subject to many a slip. So one part of the Press of Paris—not the largest part, by a long way, thank God!—is still drunk with the licence of invective and denunciation. The sots will sleep it off in the long run, I feel sure, and the better part of the nation will find a hearing for the still, small voice. But just now it is weary waiting for the friends of France, and it is no time to take up the cry, "Courage, mon ami, le diable est mort!"

They know perfectly well what is the matter with them, and for their strait-jacket they have invented the administrative machine. This is by no means to be confounded with the purely political variety of the contrivance in use in other latitudes. It is the permanent civil service, the government, in a word—the great auto-

matic contrivance that keeps them going in national housekeeping while they are on the rampage. Nowhere else, except perhaps in Germany, is there anything like it for efficiency of a kind. It is everything that they are not—stable, unchanging, the slave of tradition, a thing that moves from precedent to precedent, but with restraint instead of freedom for its aim. The first Napoleon was the inventor of it. The material with which he wrought was the wreckage of the old monarchy, still extremely serviceable in parts as a thing approved to the genius of the people by the experience of a thousand years. Dynasties, presidents, ministers come and go, but the machine grinds on for ever to do the work of the day. No matter what the tumult in Paris or at Versailles, the prefects are at their posts in the provinces, and their orders issue as calmly as if there was sleep at the centre of the system. It is a Chinese bureaucracy in completeness, with the difference that it is in thorough repair. As a piece of clockwork it is one of the greatest of human

inventions. At one end of the mechanism is the President of the Republic; at the other the humblest of the thirty-six thousand odd mayors of the communes of France—say the little fellow who rules over Blanche-Fontaine in the Doubs, with its population of four-and-twenty souls, ten of them, if you please, municipal councillors. Each of these mayors is a president in his way, as the President is only a glorified mayor. There is no overlapping of areas, no conflict of jurisdictions, and lest there should be, the special contrivance of the Council of State provides for instant appeasement. If my view could extend from this tower to the whole of the territory, I should see one vast nerve system of centralised rule. The village mayor in his sabots stuffed with straw, and with his council equally fresh from the stable, is only the reduced image of the great man at the Elysée surrounded by his ministers. So many mayors and so many communes make a canton, with another council, and generally a superior mayor for its chief. So

many cantons make an arrondissement, like the canton, less corporate in its personality, but with yet a council more — always of superior persons, naturally, as we rise in the scale—and with a sub-prefect at its head. With the arrondissement comes the electoral district for the Chamber. So many arrondissements make a department, and here the prefect sits enthroned again with his council, now a little parliament, for his guide and check. Beyond him is the Minister of the Interior in the capital, who commands the wires in every sense, and whose touches thrill by devolution and subtransmission throughout the mighty system. Beyond the Minister of the Interior there is really nothing but the Maker of the universe, and He, I believe, is not officially recognised in the constitution. Uniformity is the note, with certain exceptions of detail that are immaterial in the bird's-eye view. Paris is only a larger commune, though it has eighty mayors, because if it had seventy-nine less the one left might rival the President in power. The twofold election of the council

by the citizens, and of the mayor by the council, is the corner-stone of the system. The nation elects the Parliament, and the Parliament the President, in precisely the same way. The mayor, however, is still under control. He can be suspended for a month by the prefect, for three months by the Minister of the Interior, and for ever by the President.

This, as I have said, was Napoleon's gift to France, and the wiser sort, who dread her moods and their own, esteem it above all his victories. France rails against it from time to time, but she would not get rid of it for the world. The machine carries on the business. It collects the taxes, spends them, welcomes the entry of every citizen into the world, educates, marries, tends him in sickness and in health, and buries him when all is done. It suits everybody in his heart of hearts as a sort of fixed point in a world of flux. All but the wildest aspire to no more than the control of the motive power, only to find, in the long run, that, by its immutable laws of mechanics, it

controls them. If they strained it to bursting they would be the first to mount sky-high. All the revolutions, with perhaps the single exception of the Commune, and I am not quite sure as to that, are really but schemes for securing the control of the machine. They aim merely at changing the course, not the engine. The institution is satisfactory; its occasional uses only leave something to be desired. I remember once calling on a friend who had been shut up in the old prison of Sainte-Pélagie for some offence under the Press laws. I condoled with him, less on the hardships of his lot than on the want of respect for freedom of opinion which it involved. "We must abolish these detestable cages for free thought," I cried, looking round on the comfortably furnished room. "You are right," he said; "all I live for now is to put the opposite party here." This is the moral of French tolerance for the machine. It is a very good instrument when you have the valves under your own hand.

The interior of a ministry—what a sooth-

ing suggestion of immutability! For the perfect association of ideas I prefer that it should be one of the ministries on this left bank, the other one abounding in patches of raw modernity that spoil the impression. Let it be in the Rue de Grenelle, for choice, or in the Rue de Varenne, not much more than a good stone's-throw from our tower. Oh, the repose of its massive outer defences of plain stone that keep the courtyard sacred to the sparrows and to the suitors for place! Within it is cool and echoing to the footfall, with, at first sight, the frequent porter for its only inhabitant. He is there for life. You may know it by his urbanity, his unhastingness, which betoken perfect freedom from the irritation of uncertainty. He exacts a first rough sketch of your business, as in duty bound, then passes you on to a man on the first flight, for whose further information you fill in the drawing with a sort of colourwash of sympathies and hopes. This man may be a little *cassant* (curt) if he has had words with his wife in the morning, but you are not to take it as personal to yourself.

Now you are just on the fringe of the life of the hive. It is a slippered life, and it is still ease. The messengers who pass to and fro between the porter's lodge and the rooms above suggest peace ineffable and the continuity of things. Some of them wear long brown holland blouses that eke out their modest incomes by saving their coats. They carry huge *dossiers*, or portfolios, which seem to memorialise the business of the world, and which, in their bulky universality, are sermons in leather on the insignificance of events. The imaginary perspective of these *dossiers*, as you might see them stored in the archives, would naturally strengthen the moral. They are the connecting-links of all the little systems, monarchical or republican, that have ceased to be, and they maintain the perfect sequence of administrative policy. Those under which the porters stagger for the moment are only the *dossiers* of the day, the passing wrinkles on the brow of France, which have come here to be smoothed out. They will be smoothed out by means of letters, faultless alike in style

and handwriting, the very office-marks of which seem to link you with the present and the past. Now, haply, you come in touch with the clerical staff, but always in a discreet, secluded, monastic sort of way. The beardless dandies are often cadets of good families, who, with subventions from the private purse, are able to cut a figure on the stipend of a labourer. The employment in a ministry gives them position, and that is enough in a country which betrays its age by still cherishing a sort of prejudice against trade. Some of them scribble things for the papers in their abundant leisure; the detestable Rochefort began in this way. Others save themselves for social successes and a good match. The little bits of red ribbon in the buttonholes betoken the higher grades.

To see all the grades as in review we must wait for the sacred hour of noon—the hour at which we might see the huge city below us black with the shifting specks that mark a whole population pouring out to luncheon. Then the bureaus begin to empty

for a solemn lull of business, which lasts for the better part of two hours. The place looks more than ever permanent and unchanging in this view. The French *déjeuner*, the French dinner, give one faith in the stability of things. They are so purposeful, so deliberate; they betoken so much the assurance of the continuing city, in their orderly courses, with the coffee and *chasse-café* to follow, and the billiards, cards, or dominoes for the wind-up. The *déjeuner* is the solid break in the day, and the strange thing is that its associations of rest and ease do not tend to render the resumption of toil impossible. The staff comes back to new labours, though these are not unduly prolonged. Its output of work is still considerable, although it is slow—perhaps because it is slow. The plodding method makes each step sure, and precludes the delays of revision.

The crown of things in stability is the old head porter, who has seen them all come and go, the young sparks into the prefectures or into literature, the chief ministers into

private life or into a sort of public obscurity after their brief average of the limelight of office. The man at the head is the only uncertain element of the composition. The underlings of every grade may remain for ever if they like, rising by successive steps until they write *chef de bureau* after their names. Mutation is reserved for those who have made their mark in the struggles of the political arena, and have suddenly been "bombarded" from the outside into the highest seats by explosions of parliamentary applause. Many of them, under our modern scheme of equality of opportunity, have come from the humblest stations, and go back to them after their fall in a way which has something of Roman dignity.

Once they might have hoped to save during their tenure of power. Under the Empire the ministers received a hundred thousand francs a year, with allowances; but in 1871 the salary was cut down to sixty thousand. This, in spite of free residence at the expense of the state, and other pecuniary privileges amounting

in value to about forty thousand francs more, is insufficient. No minister can now make ends meet without a private fortune. They retire from their official state perhaps to the modest pay of a deputy, nine thousand francs a year, and to occasional earnings with the pen; from glittering banquets and receptions, at which they entertained the magnates of the official world, home and foreign, to the omelet with the cutlet to follow, served by some old peasant woman from Brittany in the fifth-floor flat from which they emerged. From this cage we might almost shake hands with some ministers in their exalted retirement. Their height of disgrace has its consolations. It removes them farther from an unjust earth, and nearer to the compensating stars. I used to find M. Jules Simon at a great elevation, moral as well as material, after a fall from power which perplexed the nations with fear of change. I found M. Yves Guyot *au quatrième* the other day, drawing his breath with difficulty, I thought, amid a too dense undergrowth of economic literature, and writing his daily article for

the *Siècle* in championship of the ex-prisoner of Rennes.

The *petits employés* have the best of it. Venerable figures, you may trace them in their old age to calm retreats in the leafy suburbs that bound our view, where they take the evening air in the zinc summer-houses of gardens relatively as small as their own souls, or under the shadows of plaster busts which figure the transient and embarrassed phantoms of forgotten ministers of the day, to whose favour they owed their place. They are reposing before dinner, after their game of bowls in the public avenue played to a treble of applause from a circle of their own order.

Law and police form an integral part of the machine, enduring, unchanging, in their hierarchical condition a solid bulwark against the vagaries of the popular spirit. To feel this to the full one should attend the Red Mass at the Palais de Justice in early November, which marks the reopening of the courts after the long vacation. The Archbishop of Paris presides in person, as

though to show the solidarity between all the powers that be. Here again one sees that this shifting society has still its foundation of conservative forces. It is the old order of this old, old people, still holding its own amid the new. The Revolution may have changed the forms; it could not change the spirit—the way of looking at things, in which habit proves itself the true heir of the ages. The great judges are in their robes of red; hence the name of the function. Nothing much seems to have happened for centuries as they file in. So they robed and so they filed when the Bastille still frowned over Paris, and when the oubliettes of the feudal castles were the best-remembered things in France. It is all pure middle age. The black-robed judges of the Tribunal of Commerce—a touch of novelty by virtue of their office—might be visible from here as they pass from their court on the other side of the boulevard, through a dense crowd. Within the palace the Council of the Order of Advocates, with the *bâtonnier* at its head, defiles from the prisoners' gallery to join the

judges. The procession moves towards the Sainte-Chapelle, where Saint Louis went to church seven centuries and a half ago, as we may go to church to-day. The rich toilets of the visitors feed the blaze of colour. Here, on the front benches, is the red of the Court of Appeal and of the Court of Cassation, that famous court which stemmed the torrent of popular fanaticism in the "affaire." Silk and ermine, velvet and lace, nothing is wanting in the trappings to carry the mind back to the ages of faith.

Justice is solidly established in France, and it is organised on much the same principle as the administration. The justice of the peace, who is the magistrate of the first degree, sits in the chief town of the canton. He is removable only by the President. The members of the higher courts hold their places for life. Their social sympathies sometimes tincture their judgments. They cannot always forget that they belong by tradition to an order which was one of the nobilities of France—the nobility of the robe. They have therefore a sort of fellow-

feeling with the nobility of the sword. The Bar is a great trade-union, in spite of republican reforms. It is one of the few privileged institutions left, the last of the corporations, and as such about the only complete survival of pre-revolutionary France. Its council decides on the admission of candidates, and has a tendency to reject them if they are not of the right sort. In spite of this, the country is overrun by needy lawyers, who push up to Paris as deputies, get dazzled there by the social splendours, and go into isthmian canals, unfortunately not to drown there, but to make their fortunes and enjoy *bon souper, bon gîte, et le reste* with the glittering crowd. The council is most favourably disposed to those who keep the right company, think, and even shave, in the right way. Its upper lip, like that of the bench, is generally a terror, in the pitiless severity of its naked lines. The Bar has its own cafés, its own drawing-rooms, its own jokes. The oratory is just what you might expect from the lips. It is the revived oratory of the old school, which went straight to the reason, and left

the feelings to take care of themselves. Some of these men—some of the judges especially—glory in the thought that they have not read a work of literature of later date than the earlier eighteenth century, when, according to them, classic prose reached its high-water mark. Their art, like all art whatsoever in France, is a structure with a plan. They know exactly what they are going to say, and how they are going to say it, and when, by chance, their voice trembles, be sure it trembles to order. The looking-glass has had their first confidences in every effect of gesture. Their hearers know it and expect it, and applaud the structural skill.

Cléry, whom I used to meet in old days, sometimes terrified me by his facility as a speaking-machine. He even sounded the two *n*'s whenever they came together, as they pride themselves on doing at the Français. Nothing was wanting but the suggestion that the driving power of the amazing organism came from the blood. Maître Rousse was a master of this style—hard,

glittering, impeccable. But the hardness was grit. He stuck to his post during the Commune, and fought that usurpation all through with the weapons of law. He must have congratulated himself every night that he still had, not so much a pillow to lie on, as a head to lay on it. Maître Demange, who has wrought so strenuously for justice at Rennes and elsewhere, is another strong man. He has more animation, but, whether gay or grave, his manner is throughout tempered by finished ease, and he always keeps within the bounds of the natural note. In spite of recent reforms, the procedure is still absolutely antiquated in its presumption of the original sin of the accused, and in its regard for the sanctity of the accusation. How often has that dismal prison hard by seen wretched suspects in murder cases confronted with the remains of the victim, to the end of drawing conclusions from their tremors, and from the pallor of their cheek?

Believe me, you cannot have been a power and a polity as far back as Charlemagne for

nothing. We have seen lately how they still watch the slumbers of captives, and flash searchlights, the rays of which are expected to reach the conscience, on the blinking eyes. The rule of prudence in France is to contrive always to be the accuser, and to get the first blow in with your charge. Perhaps that is why they exhibit such a tendency to arrest one another all round in street rows. I have seen them standing in a sort of charmed circle of nervous excitement, each with a hand on a neighbour's necktie. Do not be too hard on them; they have been brought up on theories of the innate depravity of human nature. Then they are so quick-minded, so acute. A very little knowledge of your own heart soon constrains you to the sorrowful admission that the other man must be a bad lot.

To see a poor devil at his worst, I think, one must see him, not in the rat-pit of a court of justice, but in the preliminary stage of his examination by M. Bertillon. You know him, the official in charge of the bureau

of anthropometric measurements for criminals, the March hare turned expert in handwriting at the Dreyfus trial. He has the genius and, at the same time, the disease of minutiæ. He has found out that, if you can only measure a man by certain bone-measurements that never vary, the coincidence of, say, half a dozen of these is a certain clue to his identity. You have no doubt heard the invention described a thousand times. Have you ever seen it put into use? I have, in that very Palais de Justice, when they bring the prisoners in for identification before taking them into the presence of the magistrate. The drift of the inquiry lies in the question, "Have you ever been here before?" "No, monsieur, never," is, of course, but the one thing to say. At this early stage they do not want you to confess; it would spoil sport for the machine. The morning charges at the Paris police courts are, I suppose, with a difference of local colour, the morning charges everywhere. It is no doubt a terrible thing to be a suspect; the unsuspected are against you almost in spite

of themselves. The very contrast of each unkempt, unshaven creature with the trim *garde de Paris* by his side is to his detriment. Then he is led to the measuring-stand—invited to place himself there is, I believe, the proper phrase—and the attendant, who might be cutting his hair or taking his orders for a suit of clothes, cries out measurement No. 1. It is noted on a card. There may be a thousand measurements like it among the hundreds of thousands of records to which they have constant access, so our old offender may still keep a good heart. But at the second call, of course, assuming a further correspondence, we make a huge stride from the general to the particular. Somebody, clearly, has been here before with the two measurements, say of mid-finger joint and frontal bone, exactly answering to these new ones. Should a third correspondence be established, all but the "dead beats" begin to look grave. Yes, there is certainly another card up there in the archives in perfect agreement so far with the one we are making out. At this

point M. Bertillon, feeling that there is no more sport with this bird, seems politely to inquire if he is to go on, "Come, own up!" But most hunted things run till they die; and "No, monsieur, never here before," is still the rule. Finally, they close down on him by taking down the old card, and showing him his old photograph neatly pasted on the back, and dated perhaps a dozen years ago. With this the baffled wretch shrugs his shoulders as a sign that the game of hide-and-seek is up, and is marched off into another room to have his portrait taken anew for the appendix to the record. He is often betrayed by his stare of amused curiosity at the old one, as he recognises a forgotten necktie, a forgotten trimming of the hair, perhaps some traces of a forgotten candour of youth. The Bertillon method is the perfection of the governmental machine, in one of its purely mechanical developments. It is fascinating to an eminently scientific nation to think that, with the aid of science, justice can work with this positive certainty. Some of them no doubt dream of a day

when the Röntgen rays will be turned with success into the criminal mind, and trials and confessions will alike become a superfluity.

The towers of Notre Dame, standing clear against the sky, may serve to remind us of the great struggle on the part of the statesmen to bring the Church into the machine, as a real effective force working heart and soul for the Republic. But they are thwarted by the freethinkers on the one side, who would like to make agnosticism a cult, and by the Church itself, with its traditional respect for the monarchical system. The too logical mind of the French abhors a transaction on the principle of give and take. It is for all or none, and it better understands the tyranny of an opponent's usurpation than what it regards as the weakness of his compromise. The Pope has made unheard-of efforts to bring the parties together by enjoining a hearty acceptance of the Republic on the part of the Clerical and Monarchical parties. And it is to be noted that, at the last elections, the "Ralliés,"

who represent the Royalists that have come over to the Republic, returned in increased numbers. But, then, so did the Socialists, and between these two there is, I think, racial war. The Radicals, as a freethinking party, dream of a scheme of reasoned morality that shall take the place of the old religion and be a new one. So they issue neat little manuals in which they show, Socratically, the logical necessity of doing good to your neighbour, and, as it were, defy you to be other than virtuous if you have a due regard for the syllogism. The late Paul Bert spent no little of his precious time in these exercises. The Church, all the churches, are constitutionally parts of the machine. They are subventioned by the State—Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and even Mohammedans alike. They are under the supervision of the Minister of Public Worship. The bishops are nominated by the Government, and even when the French cardinals have received their appointment from the Pope they still come back to have their hats handed to them by the President

in solemn audience. It has been said that if the Church could see its way to a perfect reconciliation it might yet form the basis of a dominant Conservative party, and that most Frenchmen want no more than to have the priest in his place. I doubt it. Besides, can he consent to take a mere place with the rest? By virtue of his profession he aspires to nothing less than the dominion of the whole of life. The Radicals are just as strenuous in their determination to find a substitute for him. Ingersoll was only a criticism after all. Freethought here is, in thousands of minds, a working scheme. "Ni Dieu ni Maître" was the device of fierce old Blanqui, that tameless lion of revolt. There is a whole literature of religion without God.

Right below us lies the sinister military school. The men that rule there form part of the machine, and the difficulty with them just now is that they want to be the whole of it. They sulk with the civil power on the one side, as the Church sulks with it on the other. The hold of the army on

opinion is enormous, just because it has become identified with the people as a vast national militia. Every man serves, and most men bring away with them some professional sympathy with the service. As the grocer watches the passing regiment at Longchamp, he feels that he is with comrades, and that their very cloth is only a sort of best suit he has in reserve. The whole future of free institutions in France lies in that grocer's frame of mind. If he remembers that he is a citizen first and a soldier afterward, the Republic is safe. If not, and he keeps the citizen in the background, then there is no knowing what usurpations may not be dared and done. I am assured by one who ought to know that the soldier is still the citizen, and the republican citizen, in arms. But the same authority admits that, when he served his term, he scarcely looked at a newspaper, or took any interest in the questions of the day. The barrack spirit had marked him for its own. The prevalent uncertainty on this point is sometimes ludicrous in its

effects. On the return of a successful commander the first care of the Government is to keep him out of the way. When General Dodds came back from Dahomey he was isolated as though he had brought the plague with him. It was the same with poor Major Marchand. If America were France, the returning Admiral Dewey would have been invited, not to say ordered, to recruit his health in the country, and the Government, while still constrained to offer him a smiling welcome, would have trembled every time he approached Washington or New York. In distant colonies, far, far beyond the purview of the tallest of conceivable Eiffel Towers, the generals have sometimes flatly refused obedience to the civil governor. The Government, which would have liked to shoot them, has had to go on smiling. Remember what lately passed in the French Sudan. An officer was recalled for cruelties. He turned, with his native following, on another officer who bore the message, and massacred him and the whites of his mission to a man. Some of the wilder

newspapers say that an African satrapy under a soldier of fortune would be entirely to their taste.

The machine is only less strong in social than in political influence. The administrative institutions are *corps de société* as well as *corps d'état.* Each of them has its salons, managed by clever women who, in intriguing for their husbands, often against one another, still strengthen the general framework. The prefect's wife looks after the department, as the President's wife is supposed to look after the State. She encourages waverers, gives the disaffected to understand that they need not be altogether without hope. Society proper, or improper, may think itself entitled to gibe and scoff, as it sometimes does, I believe, in other republics. But nothing can deprive the official world of influence, since it holds patronage and power. Every one of the provincial capitals, lying beyond us on all sides in the depths of the haze, has its official circle, where the powers that be try to agree not to differ too openly in the

interest of the general stability of things. The university professors and their wives belong to this set. The superior clergy do not refuse their countenance when the professors show a proper outward conformity of respect for the Church, and reserve the Voltairean epigram for the fireside. The general in command of the district, or, more strictly speaking, Mme. la Générale, brings the officers to the official dances, at which also the district bench and bar shake a stiff leg.

A ball at the Elysée is a great function which has been in process of gradual democratisation ever since the foundation of the Republic. Mme. de MacMahon was about the last who tried to keep it select. It was an anachronism. The old *couches sociales* sulked, and begged to reserve themselves for her private parties. The new were not asked. The true theory of such a gathering is the one that now prevails. It is a review of all the forces that make for order and for stability, and it excludes no one who has a place of importance in the

administrative machine. The diplomatists still have the privilege of a room to themselves. But this is more or less open to the public gaze, and it serves to concentrate some of the most striking effects of the spectacle.

To-night's ball at the Hôtel de Ville, which, if we could stay long enough, might presently signalise itself to us as a scheme of illumination, is a still more characteristic sight. It is a festival of all the civic forces, where the municipal councillor and the district mayor may feel that they have been admitted to the great partnership of the government. The note of brotherhood, rather than of class distinction, at all these gatherings is the cross of the Legion of Honour, in all its glittering grades. Most other orders seem to cry, "Stand off!" to the mass of mankind. This one cries, "Come over and help us!" to every active brain and strong hand. To have it not is more of a reproach than to have it is a distinction. Its true and entirely sound significance is there. It is a public certifi-

cate of the fact that, whatever your work may be, you have done that work well —a universal brevet of eminence in every line of labour and of effort conducive to the common good. You may not want it, but —what will people think? One day Gustave Doré began to languish with a sort of green-sickness of melancholy which no one could precisely diagnose. His aged mother was called into consultation, and affirmed with emphasis that he was pining for the Legion of Honour. The matter was immediately referred, in confidence, to the Minister of Fine Arts, and the result was a cross and a cure.

Such is the great governmental machine —a national invention, like the corset, and indispensable to the figure of France. It keeps the country in shape amid a thousand shocks. It has scarcely known change since the time of its founder. It has served the varying purposes of Louis XVIII. and Charles X. and Louis Philippe, of the Republic of 1848 and the Second Empire, and while the servant, it has also been the

master of all. It has kept up the real continuity of institutions, and has saved the democracy from itself by opposing a solid rampart to social, as distinct from merely political, innovation. It is a sort of supreme court in the domain of action, ever engaged in looking after the foundations of things, and tempering the wind of crude doctrine to the lamb of the body politic so frequently shorn. Without it, or something like it, that is to say, without a strong executive of a kind, France would have gone to pieces a dozen times this century.

But no human contrivance is perfect, and the machine has one weak spot. Its heel of Achilles is the Parliament, and especially the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber would be well enough if it were *à l'Américaine*, instead of *à l'Anglaise*—if it had not the fatal power of unmaking ministries by a vote. With reasonably permanent cabinets, policy would be fairly continuous, as well as administration. As it is, almost any determined minority can upset the ministerial apple-cart by an

intrigue. The malcontents have only to lie in wait, and snatch a hostile division when nobody is looking, and out the Government goes, though it may have just given itself the proud title of the "strongest of modern times." Something is wanted that would confine the deputies to their business of making the laws, and secure the administration in its function of executing them.

The wrecking of ministries has become a mere trick, like the spot stroke in billiards, and, in the interests of France, it should be barred. It was a reproach as far back as the time of Louis Philippe. Mürger's Bohemian, on moving into new lodgings, orders the concièrge to wake him every morning by calling through the keyhole the day of the week and of the month, the moon's quarter, the state of the weather, and "the Government under which we live." Amid Moderate Republicans, Radical Republicans, Radical Socialists, Socialists dyed in the wool, Reactionary Monarchists ditto, and Ralliés, who have graciously accepted the Republic under the promise of a reasonable share

of the loaves and fishes, there is always sure to be somebody to offend. If you hold the disinterested position of a mere observer, and have access to the lobbies, you may spy the tempest on the horizon when the cloud is no bigger than a man's hand. I have seen M. Clémenceau as storm-fiend-in-chief, and M. Clovis Hugues in subcharge of the Cave of the Winds—the latter perhaps with a trembling palm, which manifestly itches for its threatened application to another member's face. The cloud bursts as by order; the ministry is laid on its back. Sometimes there is no warning, and the catastrophe comes out of a clear sky. The machine, of course, is no more disturbed by it than the solid rock would be in the like case; but the moral effect is none the less to be deplored. The worst evil is the way in which this uses up the governing men. They get tired of being laid on their backs for nothing, and at every fresh crisis there is a greater difficulty in finding entries for this foolish sport. The positive refusals to serve become more

numerous and more embarrassing, and the fear grows that the President will finally have to advertise in the newspapers for a minister. There ought to be a club of ex-ministers, or a monthly dinner of them, where they might meet and compare notes on the futility of all effort to please a people with disease of the nerves.

As the bell gives the signal, and it is "all aboard" for the descent, I reflect that France will have to watch herself, or she may find this disease incurable. Her misfortune is that she has been taught to live from this part of the organism in public affairs. Her private life is free from all reproach of the kind. There the nation is serious, calculating, close, ever haunted by the melancholy of a too keenly prophetic vision of the possibilities of ill. It must find an outlet somewhere for the mere spiritual waste of its despondency, and, like the rest of us, it has a tendency to dump its rubbish into the public domain. I am convinced that it would be less frivolous in conduct if it were less sad at heart.

PARISIAN PASTIMES

II.

PARISIAN PASTIMES

THE Parisian is more given to pastimes than to sports. The distinction is, in his view, that pastimes are made for man, whereas man is notoriously made for sports. He carries a sport as far as it may go for sheer amusement, and stops there. All the rest—that tends to the ideal perfection of the athlete—he counts but labour and sorrow. This is in harmony with his entire outlook on life. He is mainly sociable in his amusements rather than mainly competitive. To me he never seems less himself than when racing for a prize, by day and by night, on a cycle track that reminds one of some foolish adaptation of the scheme of the praying-wheel. So the best of his recreative life is

a day in the country, with only just such amusements as comport with rural ease. Between his setting forth in the morning and his coming back at night, weary with blessedness, he has picnicked in one of the outlying woods of the capital, perhaps with his entire family, including the mother-in-law.

The returning crowds at the stations have not all been to Versailles, St. Cloud, and St. Germain. These places are more or less inevitable to the many, but the wiser know where to find the less-known woods and heights and the scenes that have as yet escaped advertisement. Starting, maybe, from Bougival, they have looked at the site of Josephine's country house, now but a memory, and have thought perhaps what curious inclosures and reinclosures busy man is ever making for himself in space. An old house is but a little setting in the void for scenes from the drama of life. It vanishes; a newer takes its place; and one cubic inclosure in its time witnesses the play of many parts. To think of these scenes in

their succession through the ages is to have the very air peopled with ghosts, and to risk the mental distraction of a witches' revel. But to consider so is to consider too curiously in this connection.

The stroll is across corn fields with woody heights on one side. The painters of Corot's generation used to harbour here, and many of them left pictures for their score at Souvent's restaurant. The more knowing wayfarers, of course, avoid these vanities of anecdote, but everything may be excused to the sightseer. At the utmost, the others have walked by the river-bank to look at the Machine de Marly, a huge wheel that carries water to the settlements on the height. If they were still for civilisation they mounted by Le Pecq to St. Germain. If they wanted a change after that they branched off to Les Loges, and registered vows to return for the annual fair in September, to dance and sup by torchlight, according to immemorial custom, and so home. Some, again, have started for Sannois, on the Northern and Western Railways, for the panorama seen

from the windmill on the height, and have pushed on to Cormeilles by way of the hills, with the valley and the river at a cosy distance below; or they have tarried at Herblay to play at fishing under the trees.

Innumerable are the ways in which you may tire yourself in these environs on a summer afternoon. The ultra-civilised way is to take train to Enghien, the township of pleasure which has grown up, with the help of capital, as the gaudy framework of a sulphur spring. Another, and a better, is to make for Montmorency, where Jean Jacques set up his hermitage at the top of the hill, and at a point in time when the place was still most ancient of days, and mellowing in a rich decay of historic associations. Here again, and right on from here to Andilly, it is all fairyland from the heights—Paris in the far distance, picked out in the white of its stonework and the gold of the dome, with verdant belts of flowers and market-gardens midway. At Andilly you are on the verge of the forest

of Montmorency, and may go right through to Bethemont, or partly through to St. Leu for the train. And even by this compromise you may get dusty and tired and parched enough for the mood of rural happiness.

Paris is fringed all about with these woods and forests, anything but primeval, of course, under modern administration, yet still wild enough for provocation to much of the fugitive verse of the time. Fontainebleau, beyond this inner circle of umbrage, is a larger order, and if only you have enough self-control to keep from the château and from Barbison, it is more majestic with its giant oaks and its Titanic boulders. Yet the tourist will inevitably go to the one for its association with the painters Millet and Rousseau, and to the other on the gentle compulsion of the guide-books. Michelet, in his study of the insect life of the forest, keeps throughout to the note of its savage charm. Dearer to the elect of these pilgrim crowds is Sceaux, almost due south of the capital, and, in a sense, within a stone's-throw of it, as befits a scene of natural

beauty that was accessible in the time of Paul de Kock. To readers of that half-forgotten writer it is still haunted by the shadow of the "Jeune Homme Charmant," and of his brotherhood in that larger sense which includes sisterhood as well.

But the glory of Sceaux is that it is a stepping-stone to "Robinson." Robinson is our realised ideal of a Cockney paradise. It includes a certain suggestion of savage freedom, with due facilities for the fun of the fair—the wilderness tempered by Coney Island. It is a restaurant, and the subject of its votive title is no other than our old friend Crusoe. The idea is that you leave teeming Paris for this retreat, in which you may meditate on the shows of things, and, between train and train, play at being cut off from civilisation. So, in its garden, you find a stately tree where you may lunch or dine in bowers cunningly perched high in the branches. There are two or three of these in tiers, and all of them, especially the topmost, command views of charming scenery. The vogue of Robinson has led

to the invention of many fraudulent trade-marks. The village abounds in restaurants dedicated to "Old Robinson," to "Crusoe," and to different variants of the name, including one which boldly starts on a new line by a titular invocation to Man Friday.

But Robinson, pure and simple, is the genuine article. The title illustrates the tendency of the French to grasp at the first thing that comes handy in English names. The surname they generally give up for a bad job, but they clutch at the Tom, Dick, or Harry that precedes it, and hold on for dear life. Even when they have it by the right end, they sometimes contrive to go wrong. Crabb Robinson tells us that all through a ceremonial dinner in his honour, Mme. Guizot overwhelmed him with compliments on the creation of *ce charmant Vendredi*, in a hazy belief that he was the author of the famous work.

Robinson may serve to illustrate what I mean as to the ordinary Parisian relation to sports and games. The throngs set out, in the first place, for fresh air and landscape;

and for diversions they take anything that comes in their way. Sometimes they carry a ball to play with; more often they find their toys in the suburban restaurant. An open-mouthed frog into which they pitch a leaden nicker will amuse them for hours.

Those of nicer taste will perhaps prefer the Port Royal country. This is not so much for the sake of the country as of that ruined memorial of a community of men and women who tried a fall with the Church of Rome, in the interests of the higher spiritual life, and got very much the worst of it. The route is by train from Montparnasse to Trappes, beyond Versailles, and thence on foot through Voisins to the old abbey which was the seat of the settlement. For others there is Cernay la Ville, a woodland haunt of artists, exquisite in hill and valley, hamlet and ruin. Or, again, the idler may take train to Le Plessis Belleville, in the north-east, and walk to Ermenonville for more souvenirs of Rousseau.

But why go on? The whole vernal basin, in the centre of which Paris lies, is a scene

of witching beauty—beauty of hill and dale, beauty of association suited to every taste. So, as we have seen, if you like to flavour the picturesque with literature, there are Ermenonville, Port Royal, Montmorency. If you are for things "paintable" you have Cernay, Fontainebleau, and Gretz. If angling is the excuse there are Mantes, Marly, Andrésy, Lagny, and Charenton; while for boating you can hardly go wrong at Rueil, Herblay, Bougival, and Nogent on the Marne. In one of their aspects these are sports highly cultivated. In their relation to the ordinary life of the people they are mere incidents of an outing. The ordinary Parisian rowing is but three men in a boat, who, in spite of their being on a river, are still very much at sea. More commonly still, it is but one man with a girl, both happily unaware that they are in peril of their lives. They have not far to go. Their mark is the little restaurant on the island which is the sole aim of the excursion. They have come out not so much to row as to breakfast in rowing toggery, to chatter

aquatics and scandal, and to sing chansonettes.

In the same way, the holiday fishing is often very little better than the line and the bent pin, as the football is only a vindictive punishment of a leaky india-rubber sphere which requires frequent inflation by a united family. So, too, cycling, although the French are capable of carrying it to great perfection on the track, is often, for the purpose of these excursions, a young man giving a young woman a ride in a bicycle gig, in which she courteously affects to sit at ease, while he toils up the rural slope. Some of these contrivances are fearfully and wonderfully made, and include storage for the baby and for the provisions for the day.

For rowing, as a sport, there are clubs all about Paris, and all about France, with a Parisian Club of the Oar as lawmaker. The laws are made in a congress held annually in the capital, in time for the match between the eights of the Seine and the Marne, the first event of the rowing year. Asnières

was once the great metropolitan centre, but avoid it now exactly as you would avoid the plague, for it has guilty relations with the drains of Paris. Everywhere there is difficulty in getting good boats for hire. The supply is naturally adjusted to the demand of the majority, who need tubs in which they may paddle, but may with difficulty drown. One of the great annual races is between the Rowing Club de Paris and the Société Nautique de la Marne. The championship of the Marne is for the early part of September. About a month later comes the fixture for the great race on the Seine for the championship of France. This is in three heats, each of two thousand metres, and it is open to all nations. It is an old institution. At first the English had matters all their own way, but the French submitted with a good grace for the sake of the lesson. Then, gradually learning the management of scull and skiff, they sent men like Armet and Lein to victory on their own course, the latter to the more daring venture at Henley, where, however, he

had to lower his colours in the home of the sport.

The Parisians have little to learn from anybody in scientific cycling. Without entering into too technical scrutiny of records, it may be said that they have brought the machine to high perfection as an instrument of sport, and to higher perfection as one of use. They not only cultivate heart disease on the racing-track with as much assiduity as other people, and hold frequent race meetings, but they use the machine extensively in daily life on ordinary errands of business or pleasure. This is the true test of any new method of locomotion. They are admirably seconded by the administration of Paris, which gives them good roads everywhere, and sometimes roads all to themselves, as in the approaches to the Bois, which, for all the qualities of a cycling course, is about the best in the world. The revolution, in this land of the motor, is naturally the motor cycle. The rate at which the Parisians charge through the public thoroughfares on this fearful contrivance

I have already mentioned. None but the most nimble can hope to avoid them. The motor is the modern short cut to the survival of the fittest.

They have made many laudable attempts to acclimatise football, and have taken a beating, at regular intervals, from one of the English visiting teams. If they do not succeed in this as well as they might it is in part to be imputed to them as merit. As persons of taste they have a great horror of *brutalité* in sport. "We do not want to turn French lads into English ones," cries M. Ribot, in his important work on educational reform published the other day. "Rough sports do not suit our race, more refined in its *vigueur élégante* than that of the Anglo-Saxon." In the last resort they usually fail to see why they should suffer for their enjoyments, and they sicken with disgust, rather than with fear, when the dhooli-bearers and the surgeons follow the team into the football field.

This is the French note, always the touch of elegance, and this is why a certain asso-

ciation with "fashion" is of the essence of French sport. It does not, like English sport, usually begin among the people, retaining something of the primitive wildness of its origin; or, if it does, it is always trying to mount to select circles. Football will take a long time to reach the French masses. Their instincts know not the stern joy of the scrimmage. For all their combativeness they regard life as a progression, an orderly development, not as a battle and a march. For this sport, as for most of the others that involve danger, we must wait on the upper classes. They have imported football and polo and what not, and have done their best to tame them into diversions fit for a man who values a whole skin.

Their châlet of the Racing Club in the Bois de Boulogne is a model of taste in the rustic style. It is all prettiness without and within; and, in the latter, it does not disdain the aid of millinery. The hall is hung in sky-blue and white, and with the diplomas of honour won in the field. To-day the club, with its four hundred and fifty

members, claims the lead among French societies of athletic sport. It began in the humblest way, but still among the "directing classes." A few young fellows at the Lycée Condorcet wanted to stretch their legs, and bethought them of foot-racing in the English style. But first they tried it in the French, that is to say, with prettiness as the first end and aim. They ran in satin blouses, in jockeys' breeches, in jockeys' hats, in jockeys' boots, nay, some positively with jockeys' whips in their hands, as though with some covert design of touching themselves up behind. Then gradually they swept all this nonsense away, crossed the Channel for their lesson, and rigged themselves in the style approved to experience. From that time forth they did exceedingly well. They invited English amateurs to compete, and held against them, year by year, the championship in three of the four distances, the shorter ones. Even the mile they won three times out of six; and though their champion, Borel, was beaten in 1891 by an American, he made a good

fight for it. They train for their work, though, characteristically, always under the doctor's orders for moderation. In the same way they brought in football, where they have yet to beat their masters, and they are now introducing it into the playgrounds of the lyceums.

Then they busied themselves with lawn-tennis, and with success. For their best in this line we must go to the club of the Ile de Puteaux on the Seine, a charming rural retreat lying under the guns of Mont Valérien. There you have about a dozen courts, with great refinement in the domestic service, as well as the rigour of the game. Still toiling, and not in vain, after its English masters, our "high life" has now its Polo Club near Bagatelle, in the Bois. It exacts strict guarantees of respectability. On the ornamental side none are eligible for admission but the mothers, wives, and unmarried sisters and daughters of members. For their benefit there is a regular service of five o'clock tea, under umbrella tents. It is not only polo, but polo with a background of

dwarf forests, of the spires of Saint Cloud, of the meadows of Longchamp.

In like manner the French are acclimatising golf, especially on the shores of the Mediterranean. At the same time Paris is reviving for its own benefit several of the national games. To see some pretty play of *longue paume*, the old *longue paume* of the South, go on Tuesdays and Fridays at about five, and on Sundays all day long, to the gardens of the Luxembourg. It is played there with rackets according to the best tradition, not with the hand, the tambourine, or the wicker glove, which are still in vogue in the Pyrenees.

This is a popular game, since it is played both by and for the crowd. The fashionable sports affect retirement and take great pains to secure it. Most of them had their modest beginnings at the old *Tir aux Pigeons* in the Bois, until they grew strong enough, as we have seen, to set up housekeeping for themselves. The *Tir aux Pigeons*, in its turn, began as a skating club, where the happy few might enjoy themselves in winter

without intrusion from their fellow-creatures. The antiquary may find it worth while to examine the archives of these institutions for traces of English origin. In the old rules of the Paris Gun Club, for instance, he will find: "Il est interdit de tirer les deux coups de fusil à la fois: si le pigeon est tué il est compté 'No Bird.'" "Le tireur en place, et prêt à tirer, doit crier 'Pull.'"

Pistol-shooting is much more nearly indigenous. As duellists, the French naturally have to learn to kill in both kinds. The crack shots are celebrated in luxurious monographs of sport, adorned with their portraits, and doing full justice to their "records." The day of the perfect young man of fashion includes some practice with the pistol at one of the private galleries. Sometimes he has a shooting-gallery in his garden, and fires a few shots on rising as a substitute for morning prayer. Then he usually takes a turn on horseback in the Bois—I speak by the card. After breakfast he fires more shots, at some rendezvous in town. He discusses the day's shooting

with his friends, and when this weighty business is over, I am assured, he has cleared his conscience of more than half of its burden of duties. A few visits, the theatre, and the club complete the day.

Shooting proper—the sport of the gun in the coverts—is a more serious matter. It is hard to get your covert to yourself in this democratic country. What I wrote years ago on this subject is truer than ever to-day. The most familiar type of sportsman is the small rural proprietor, whose shots, perforce, trespass on his neighbour's field because of the narrow limits of his own. He is abroad on Sundays and on holidays with his solitary dog, picking up the crumbs of sport, and it is dangerous to interfere with him in his own commune, because he is an elector as well as a proprietor, and perhaps his voice counts in the election of M. le Maire. The better kind of sportsmen form small syndicates, or shooting societies, and at the end of the day's shooting they divide the bag in equal portions, drawing lots for the odd pieces, or offering them, as a sop to Cerberus, to the

peasants on whose grounds they have trespassed. In many instances, however, they buy the right to pass over certain fields, and this is the main object of their association. The vast subdivision of landed property in France tends to confront you with a proprietor at every step, and the peasant often derives no small part of his revenue from the shooting.

But the cities send the most numerous contingent into the fields, for almost every notary, doctor, and government clerk has his weekly or monthly holiday with the gun. The preserves of the Seine-and-Oise, of the Seine-and-Marne, and of the Oise, in the neighbourhood of Paris, are said to contain as much game as all the rest of France. The best of these, of course, belong to the great proprietors, the bankers, and other millionaires, and the next in value are those that lie near enough to get the stray game from the rich man's field. These adjacent lots are much sought after by the humbler syndicates. The shooting at the châteaux, on the great country estates, presents much the

same features as in England—invitations to a large circle and a generous hospitality. The main difference is that the invitations are select only in regard to social standing, not to skill with the gun. The keenness of the French sense of the ridiculous does not extend to failure in sport: you miss, and there is an end of it; and as nobody thinks much the worse of you, you do not think any the worse of yourself. The standard of competence is not a high one, and even shooting is more of a pastime than a sport. Ladies sometimes take the field along with the men, and the Orléans princesses and the Princesse Murat used to stand in the front rank. The finest shooting estates in France are those of the late Duc d'Aumale and of the Rothschilds.

Sometimes, in the more remote excursions after smaller game, a wild boar crosses the path, so the prudent sportsman takes his hunting-knife or even his revolver with him, as well as his gun. The French list of necessaries for the field is alarmingly large; the stations at Rambouillet and Fontaine-

bleau, on nights when people are going down for the shooting, are encumbered with *matériel de guerre* in a manner that suggests a mobilisation of the army. The Revolution saw the last of the grand *battues* of the old school; and then the infuriated people held the gun and slaughtered without mercy, for food, without a thought of the future. The partridge never fairly recovered from that blow.

Fencing has been democratised like all else. At one time the management of the rapier was confined exclusively to the upper classes. Now there is an excellent fencing-school at the "dry-goods store" of the Bon Marché. The young men at the counters take their exercise in that way after working hours.

As our business is with the people rather than with the dandies, let us now go a-fishing with the loungers of the quays. Their pastime imports no great harm to the fish, because it must not import any great fatigue to the fisherman. The Seine, as it flows in or near Paris, has been fouled

by the sewage. Still, as these people pre-eminently live in their traditions, they fish in the new waters as they fished in the old. No other capital can show so many anglers to the mile of bank. They angle in the suds of the riverine laundries, in the brown waterfalls of the sewers. They crowd the Écluse de la Monnaie at the Pont-Neuf, which, in spite of its position in the very heart of Paris, is comparatively calm. This, of course, in its independence of raw result, is the true principle of enjoyment alike in sport and in life. Nor are the results unimportant; with an average of one bite to the thousand baits, great is the joy of fruition for the man who lands his fish, and of expectation for the huge remainder. There is a streak of passivity in the French nature, in needful balance with its known tendency to excitement. The sight of the quays on a summer morning strengthens the probability that one Frenchman wrote the *Imitation*, and explains how others founded Port Royal. Those who are not fishing are washing and combing the dog;

those who are doing neither are looking on.

The preference of the pastime to the sport accounts for the continued popularity of the Parisian fair. Elsewhere, in all save in its primitive trading uses, the fair is on the decline. As a revel, it is but a memory in London. Greenwich and "Bartelmy" became too much of a good thing. In Ireland they hold that when a skull comes to ill hap at one of these gatherings, what might otherwise be a verdict of manslaughter becomes a verdict of *felo de se.* The owner has literally brought it on his own head. The mere fun of the fair, as an industry, flourishes in full luxuriance in France. Families are born into the business, and die out of it—sometimes with large fortunes to their credit, computed in live stock of the desert and freaks of nature, as well as in bank-notes.

They pitch by the calendar in the environs, and even in the capital at Easter. This is for the gingerbread fair, held in the Place de la Nation, better known as the

old Place du Trône. At other times they occupy the great avenues which stretch from the barriers to the open country—for instance, the one that runs from the Port Maillot to the river, a good four or five miles of booths, counting the two rows. Throughout the summer season there is not a fête-day without its fair in one or other of the little townships beyond the walls. It is only a short journey by tram or train and you are at Versailles, St. Cloud, Meudon, or what not. The motto is, "Every man in his humour," for the trivialities of popular amusement. You may do nothing in ten thousand ways—by gambling for cakes or for pocket-knives, by throwing a ball at rag dolls, by trying your strength at ricketty machines which sometimes yield their whole internal economy to one vigorous pull of a ploughman, or by having your fortune told. The daughter of Egypt stands on the tail-board of her van, and gives the gaping throng a gratuitous sample of her wares. For this purpose she whispers fates through a long speaking-trumpet, usually directed by

judicious preference to the longest ear. In these confidences you may learn that you have wasted your time in the hopeless pursuit of a fair beauty, while another, as yet in the nature of the dark horse, appeals in vain to your fatuous blindness for a glance. The promise of full particulars for fivepence proves an almost irresistible temptation.

When you tire of this you may go shooting for many varieties of game, on a system which gives you the excitement of the chase in the open without its fatigues, and, in fact, once more reduces sport to its due proportion of pastime. The prey—hares and rabbits, and wild fowl by courtesy so-called—form a happy family, and await their doom in a cage with an edifying resignation that is manifestly quite consistent with good appetite. It is supposed to be determined by your success in attaining a bull's-eye just above their heads, with the aid of a rifle supplied by the proprietor. You have only to hit the mark to have your choice among these living prizes, and to dine on fresh game at a merely nominal cost. Needless

to say, you never hit that mark, though you may almost touch it with the muzzle of the weapon. The secret, perhaps, is in the rifling, and it may one day put inventors in gunnery on the track of that art of firing round a corner which is their philosopher's stone. The animals know, by long experience, that the vicissitudes of the day involve no mischance to them, and that they will invariably sleep in their beds at night instead of stewing in the *pot au feu* of the citizen. They gulp and nibble and chew, therefore, with the full assurance of a natural span of life. Old age and grey hairs overtake them in this honourable service, and the returning traveller may recognise them after long intervals, during which things of moment have happened in the world.

If you are for sport more worthy of the name, though still without the fatigue of personal exertion, you may have even that at the fair. There are the wrestling-booths, where real work is done by brawny champions whose trade is that of the strong man.

It is a sight for an impressionist painter—the great dingy tent with its dim lights, the throng of onlookers, open-mouthed, not so much with wonder as with a mocking chaff which is often the perfection of gutter-wit, the snorting pair in the midst pawing each other for the grip. Sometimes fashion takes a turn in this direction, and the smartest sets of our Romans of the decadence drive down after dinner to look on. This supplies a needful contrast. The little Twelfth-cake figures of the dandies, men and women, in their finery, stand out in sharp relief against the labouring champions in the ring, and the ragamuffins of the barrier in the cheap seats. An indescribable repulsion of feeling is the effect of the whole scene. It is due, I think, to a sense of the difference between the ease of the onlooker and the little ease of the performer. When two struggle alone it is something between the two, and there an end. Each does his best and his worst. When a third comes merely to gaze for his pleasure our disgust begins. You can hardly watch a cat worrying a mouse without an

uneasy feeling that, as one overmuch on the safe side, you are a bit of a coward.

These visits of fashion to the wrestling-booths will, I think, be quoted against us, with the bull-fights of far more serious import, when the time comes to write the history of our decline and fall. I knew a little girl who once, without seeing the struggle inside the booths, heard the champions announcing outside that they were about to stake their whole fortune on the issue. She waited spellbound for that issue, until presently they returned, and one declared, with heroic composure, that he had lost the savings of a lifetime. She ran home, emptied her money-box, groped her way back to the fair amid the glimmering lights of closing-time, and laid her hoard on the lap of the ruined man, now quietly smoking his pipe with the champion who was supposed to have reduced him to beggary. The story should have its climax in his tearful refusal to touch a penny of her money, but it has not. He pocketed the offering, led her to the outskirts of the fair, and told her to be

a good little girl and run straight home. Still it remains beautiful for all that.

Sometimes, but not often, you may see a bout of French boxing at the fair — the *savate.* It is a sport that hovers between those lower reaches of the street fight, which it somewhat disdains, and the higher one of the duello, to which it is never admitted. It is taught at the gymnasiums as part of the athletic course. It is an art of kicking, and it trains the foot to take the place of the fist in the personal encounters of the plebs, the hand serving mainly to parry. The foot is a terrible substitute ; its strokes are murderous, especially when none are barred. One was barred in a late encounter between the leading French professional and a British boxer. But the French, or rather the Belgian, champion delivered it all the same when he found that he was getting the worst of the bout. His opponent was supposed to be maimed for life. On the other hand, to judge by the cries of the delighted crowd, Fashoda was avenged.

After Sedan there was a great growth of

gymnastic societies in France, just as there was in Germany after Jena. They sprang up in all parts of the country, with the same patriotic ardour for physical training to the end of national regeneration. They were the first and the least offensive form of Déroulède's patriotic labours. But the poor creature could not keep politics out of them, and they languished in due course. The misfortune of the French is that their athletic exercise is still rather a system than a growth. It has not its proper beginning in the playground. The playground pastimes are still anything but what they should be. The larger boys often take no part in them, such as they are, but merely walk to and fro, and contract pimples. The others toy aimlessly with a ball or play at "touch." It is formless amusement, in fact, instead of organised sport. There is no time to repair the omission in later life.

There used to be wild dancing at the fairs. There is less of it now, if only because there is less everywhere. Dancing, in the cheap public halls, there still is all the year round,

but it is more or less professional, especially on the part of the men. These are of a pariah race, which is still lower than that of their partners. Even the student no longer dances with conviction as he used to do when Mürger's famous book was young. He goes to the prominent establishments of the worst type, but rather as an observer. The thing is a little too low on gala days, and a little too dull on the others. Many of the old halls are now the sites of stately dwelling-houses in which the citizen enjoys thé amenities of a service of water, of gas, and of tradesmen in procession on the back stairs. The old *bal des canotiers*, at the riverside resorts, in its old style, is but a memory, and not a very savoury one at that. The Parisians have lost the energy for this amusement, which in its prime was a strong rival to gymnastics. There are many ways of taking exercise, and one is to take leaps and bounds in an atmosphere of foul air and tobacco-smoke. Self-respect now holds the bëtter sort back.

In the remote quarters the washerwomen and the labourers still have their elephantine

revels to round the day of toil. In their rude assemblies you meet on a system of free admission, tempered by a sou paid to the master of ceremonies every time you dance. For popular dancing of the old-fashioned sort you must wait for the 14th of July, which marks the fall of the Bastille and the date of the national fête. The complaisant municipality keeps a ring in the open spaces, and puts up stands for the musicians. The passers-by join in, and the thing is real as far as it goes. It is the people dancing, and this is now the rarest of Paris sights. Even at the great *bal de l'opéra* public dancing has long since become a mere industry. Our grandfathers and grandmothers went there to take a part; they now go only to take boxes and to look on. The floor is peopled by the scum of the boulevard and by the male "supers" of the Opéra, who positively contract with the management for their attendance and their costumes, and who undertake to forget themselves in corybantic revel at so much an hour.

The parks and gardens of the capital are

the country reduced to scale for those who have to take the air on the wrong side of the fortifications. The most perfect miniature of this kind is the Parc de Monceaux, near the Arch, on the site of the wicked old Parc aux Cerfs. There is a little bit of everything, prairie and ruin and flowery slope, and all in a space that might almost be covered by a hat of Brobdingnag. It is about the most exquisite thing of its kind in the world. The Bois de Boulogne is known to everybody. This is the same thing on a larger scale, every bit pretty, every bit created, if only by the judicious treatment of original wild and marsh. It is a keepsake fairyland in which nothing is left to chance, and which has an air of being combed and brushed every morning, not to say perfumed from the scent-bottle. Such as it is, it is the best of its kind, and both in extent and cultivation it leaves the London parks far behind. Its faults are those of its qualities. The French with difficulty apply to a scene of nature the precept implied in the appeal, "Can't you leave it alone?"

Even Fontainebleau is laid out as geometrically as a Paris arrondissement, and though, happily, you cannot see the plan for the trees, it is a sad disenchantment on the map. This people would turn the very Yellowstone into a promenade, dotted all over with châlets for papers, and with kiosks for lemonade. The Buttes-Chaumont, on the north-east side of Paris, has been tamed in the same way. It was an old quarry when Napoleon III. took it in hand and reduced it to the ordered wildness of early Italian landscape. The rocky bits are there, but clearly they have been made with hands, and all they seem to want is a saint, praying from a missal, to complete the link with civilisation. They reverted to primitive savagery under the Commune; for here the fight was hottest, and there was no quarter given or received.

Paris is well provided with its little oases of verdure and flowers. So is London, but there is this difference: in the French city all the oases are free; in the English most are reserved for the occupants of the squares.

The square garden is obtained by the sacrifice of what would otherwise have been the private gardens, and the residents keep it to themselves. In Paris this would be impossible. It would be foreign to the genius of the people, and ridicule would kill the privilege, or finally revolution. Only a few years ago we had whole quarters in London closed to the outer world by gates and gate-keepers. They were solemnly abolished amid rejoicings, but the gardens of the squares still remain private property. One day they will go into the common domain, as the fine garden of Lincoln's Inn Fields has already gone, to the huge benefit of the inhabitants of the adjacent slums. The owners, many of them lawyers who had their offices round about, never missed a pleasance which they never used. But they claimed handsome compensation, for all that, and got it, too. When all London follows the same example of compulsory renunciation, with or without damages, the metropolis will be the garden city of the world. It almost is so now, thanks to the happy idea of laying out the old grave-

yards as pleasure-grounds. In this matter the English capital, after long lagging behind the French, has now bettered the example. Already we Londoners have music in the parks, though it will take us some time to reproduce all the essential features of a military concert in the gardens of the Luxembourg or of the Palais Royal.

The French have had a century's familiarity with the conception that the first duty of a community, in the distribution of the blessings of life, is to itself as a whole. Everything strengthens this idea in your Parisian, and it governs his beliefs with the automatic action of a truism. He expects the Government to do all sorts of things that are rarely regarded as obligations elsewhere. It has not only to fix the date of the national holiday, but to provide the entertainment. The national fête, with its free places at the theatres, free treats to the school children, free illuminations and fireworks, is a marvel of administrative hospitality. There is no sense of favour in all this on the part of the giver, but

there is a strong sense of right on the part of the receiver.

So with the enjoyment of the public galleries. Whatever higher uses they may be intended to serve, the first care of the Government is to make them minister to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. All the regulations as to hours and days of opening and general conditions of use are framed to this end. The people like to think that their art treasures at the Louvre or at the Luxembourg—their very own—beat all private collections in the world, and are managed by the best experts, ever on the look-out for new acquisitions. Their sense of personal property in the "Mona Lisa" or the "Belle Jardinière," in the Nike of Samothrace or the Venus of Melos, is deep down in them; and while they might take off their hats to these masterpieces, they would never think of doing so to their own servants who have them in charge. I have seen a milliner's apprentice smiling contemptuously at the waist of the last-named

lady, left as it is without the correction of the corset. It was bad taste, no doubt, but still it showed the saving sense of one's right to laugh as one likes at one's own. The English visitor to the National Gallery still finds it hard to divest himself of a sense of personal obligation to the policeman.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

ARTISTIC PARIS

III.

ARTISTIC PARIS

ART, literature, the drama, are not only the greatest spiritual forces in France; they are among the greatest of national industries. A man may purpose to live by them without having to feel that the first step is to run away from home. There is nothing that need shun the light in the pursuit. It leads to no grandmotherly shaking of the head, and it is not mentioned—at any rate, for banning, as distinct from blessing—at family prayers.

The French are not only ready to admire a great artist, but they are exceedingly proud to take service in his corps. Perhaps the crowning achievement of the career of Meissonier was his instalment as mayor of Poissy, his country place, a few miles from

Paris. It signified the full and perfect acceptance of him by the ratepayer. So, while Paris was at his feet, you might find him, in the intervals of homage, at the beck and call of this humble commune, labouring in its little council, and fighting the good fight of local self-government on the question of a new footpath or of a new lamp. He went from the council board to his fine château, and from there to his finer mansion by the Avenue de Villiers, twin splendours that were well-nigh the ruin of him. The last was a veritable palace of art. He designed it himself, or, at any rate, he drew every detail of the wood-carving, and you went from floor to floor by a staircase of the Italian Renaissance, until you found the little man and the little picture in the recesses of the shrine. Art was his industry, and he devoted its rewards to ambitions worthy of the king of an oil trust. He earned by tens of thousands, and spent by hundreds of thousands, and he ended his life as a hostage in the hands of the dealers, paint-

ing masterpiece after masterpiece to liquidate their claims, with only a bare percentage for his own share. The very colourman once struck for a payment on account.

The palace near the Avenue de Villiers is the ruin of many a good man. He begins to build as soon as he begins to sell, and his building may soon become a Frankenstein monster. Its claims compel him to paint for the market, instead of painting, in the first place, for his own good pleasure; and that way lies the lowest deep of ruin, the ruin of the artistic soul. Still, the very temptation implies that his craft is, in a certain vulgar sense, one of the most profitable of trades—one that enables a man to look the successful grocer in the face without a blush for the poverty of his own calling.

So it is with all the arts in France. Happily, most of their professors are content to live at home at ease, and to "put by," with never a thought of sumptuary glories. I have known a successful producer of Holy Families who lived in great simplicity,

though his time was worth so much that he was said to lose two hundred francs every time he sat down to lunch. Degas is another and a more honourable example of the same sort. He has never painted for the market; he has painted only to please himself and a circle of devotees. But these have been numerous enough to provide him with all the essentials of a happy life. He paints, sells when the wind blows a customer his way, hangs up what he does not sell on his own walls, rails at the Salon and at the Academy, and altogether enjoys himself immensely in a habitation which, by comparison, is but a tub of Diogenes. It used to be delightful to see the old man in the greenroom of the Opéra studying the flying squadrons of the ballet in their exercises at the bar. His passion was the rendering of movement—movement caught in its fugitive grace of pause. His tulle in the moment of transition to fleecy cloud, his twinkling feet on their way to become stars of the firmament, are abiding joys.

Nowadays, therefore, students may enter the arts, as they have long since entered the professions, as recognised careers commending themselves alike to ambition and to the prudence of the chimney-corner. The change is not confined to France. But there is a difference. A lad who goes to school at the London Royal Academy goes for his teaching and no more. He still follows his earlier way of life and his social traditions, and his day's work is only one of the things of the day. A lad who enters the Beaux Arts at once belongs to a veritable student's corps. He is a new man. The tomfooleries of the reception by the class—so often described—have still a meaning. It is not merely that the freshman has to sing a song by order, to do the meanest "chores," and generally to make an ass of himself. The real purpose is to take the nonsense of mere individualism out of him, and to make him feel that hereafter he belongs to a fraternity. The processions of the students, their mighty ball of the four arts, their very street rows, are all parts of

99021

the same process. Every neophyte has still his eye on the great possibilities of his career, and a sense of the unity that is strength. His hopes make all his hardships easy. The horse-beef of the restaurants, where they manage the whole dinner of four courses and dessert well under two francs, is only an accident of the pursuit of glory. All things conspire to put the famished customer into good conceit with himself.

Paris lives even more obtrusively for art than it lives for commerce. There is art everywhere—in the streets and gardens as well as in the picture-galleries, in the churches and town halls, decorated by liberal commissions from Government. The very bill-boards are galleries of black and white. The Government does its part just as if the industry were a question of coal or iron. It is fostering and protecting, if not protective. The elementary-school system, as we have already seen, is a net thrown over all France to catch children of promise. If they do well in their rudiments of drawing, they are passed on to schools

where they may do better. If they do supremely well in these schools, they will assuredly be urged to go to the Beaux Arts.

Of course most of the students enter that institution without any call but the inner one. However, there the school is, for all. It is a masterpiece of contrivance to a given end, with its grade upon grade of teaching right up to the highest. Nothing is left to chance. You are supposed to know your rudiments, and more, when you go there; it is no school for the A B C. You must bring drawings or paintings to the professor as evidence of vocation. If he thinks there is promise, he gives you leave to "aspire." This means that you may enter the section of the antique, where he will quietly keep an eye on your work. If you fail there, you go no further. If you succeed, you one day get your promotion to the life-class, and rank as a member of the *atelier* of your chosen master. From this time forth he takes something of a personal interest in you. His devotion to art, if not to the

student, never fails. I have seen Gérôme propped up on a bed of sickness to look at the drawings of a raw hand from the other side of the sea, a lad who was not even his countryman. And remember that men like Gérôme teach virtually for nothing. Their stipend from the State is ridiculous—a mere drop in the bucket of their earnings. They come down to give of their best to all these youngsters, from all quarters of the world, just for love of their art and pride in it.

In the *atelier* you have the stimulus of all sorts of competitions. There is the monthly contest for the right to choose your place. The professor looks at your work, marks it as first, second, third, and so on, in the order of merit; and as it is marked, so you have the right to plant your easel where you will for all the month to come. It registers a step in honour, and it precludes bad blood. Then comes the annual competition for the medal, or a tremendous struggle for a place in some special class. Yvon's used to be a favourite for the rigour of the game in

drawing. The professor held that, whatever else a man carried away with him from the Beaux Arts, he should not fail to have an impeccable perception of the niceties of form. The other things were for other teaching, for other stages. Yvon's best man was able to draw anything in any position, and to be beyond the reach of surprise by the eccentricities of contour. With this we have examinations in history, ornament, perspective, anatomy. Students are supposed to know something about these collaterals of their great subject. Many take the history and the perspective in a perfunctory way, feeling that the strain is not there, and that drawing and painting are still the heart of the mystery. In the final heat for Yvon's the few that were left did their best in a drawing from the figure, which had to be completed in so many days of two hours each.

Beyond this, of course, there is the struggle for the Prix de Rome—very properly restricted to Frenchmen. It is something like a prize—the winner has free

quarters in the art capital of the world on a liberal allowance from the State. The first heat is a sketch in oils, and the result, of course, leaves many out of the race. The second is a figure in oils. For the third, the few left standing are sent to paint against one another for their lives on a subject given by the school. Now, there are all sorts of possibilities of unfair play in a competition of this sort, and against them authority has taken due precaution. A man may get outside help, and bring in a work that is only half his own; and even if he does every bit of it, he may still have fed his invention on the contraband of borrowed ideas. So, to prevent all that, they put him in a kind of monastic cell in the school itself, and there for three mortal months, until his task is done, he has to live and work, with no communication from the outer world. He is what is called *en loge*. He brings in his own traps, and he is as effectually under lock and key as any Chinese scholar competing for the prize of Peking. The moving-in day for the

Prix de Rome is one of the sights of the Latin Quarter, with its baggage-trains of personal gear ranging from the easel of study to the fiddle of recreation. When it is all over, and the best man has won, he settles for four years in the capital of Italy to rummage at his ease in its treasure-houses of the art of all time. Of course he has to rummage on a plan. Paris requires of him a work every year, to show that he has been making good use of his time. If this is of unusual merit, it is bought by the Government.

The Beaux Arts is an all-round institution, like most others in France. It is for sculpture as well as for painting; for architecture, for line-engraving; even for the cutting of gems. In every one of these branches the Government offers encouragement by the purchase of good work. In every one it stores the best examples, many of them the spoil of vanquished nations, and provides the best teaching and the best libraries of critical and historic reference. The lectures cover the whole field. Yet, complete as it is in itself,

the great school is only one of the sections of the Institute of France.

The Institute is for the higher learning in all its branches. Its five academies include the Académie Française, which, be it remembered, is only another sovereign state of this mighty federation of the things of the mind. For others still we have the Academies of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, of Science, and of Moral and Political Sciences. In its entirety it is a sort of "Inquire within for everything"—France luxuriating in the sense of universalism of mastery over all that pertains to knowledge. Nothing ought to come amiss to it. When the Chinaman in "Cham's" caricature boggles over the bill of fare, the waiter leads him by his pigtail to the Institute to ask for an interpreter.

Literature is another of the great industries, for France still does a considerable export trade in that article. Nothing is wasted. The still-born fiction of the year is regularly shipped to South America as the latest rage of the boulevard. Most of its job

lots are simply paradoxes that have failed. The French are always on the look-out for the new thing, and this is at once the worst danger of their literature and its alluring charm. They have their spring patterns in ideas, as in muslins, and a fashion seldom outlasts the season. The literary schools are about as short-lived as the governments, and founders come and go just like ministers of State. You meet young fellows who have had their day—greybeards of failure still with raven locks; for they must be very young at the start. Paris likes them tender, since she means to eat them up. I have known a lad of parts quite put out because his "system" was not ready for publication before he had turned eighteen. France believes in youth just because of her age. The contact warms her blood. She has believed in it more than ever since the German War. The schoolboy lords it in all the arts, and the salons discover an infant prodigy every day. It leads to some waste of effort, of course. The eccentricities of these young men in a hurry are appalling.

Critical indignation is thrown away upon them, and the only corrective is the rude justice of their struggle for survival.

The history of French schools from the beginning of the century is a history of nature working by tooth and claw. The pure romantics, after a vigorous attempt to destroy the classicists, were themselves destroyed by their own offspring of diabolism, as these, in turn, fell before the romantics of the epileptic variety. These revolutions in art devour their own children, just like the others; and there is always a Mountain brooding rapine at the expense of the fatness of the plain. The Parnassians and the Plastics, who swept the last Romantics out of the field, are themselves only a memory. It seems a far cry to the time when the first care of the intelligent foreigner on reaching the boulevard was to buy the latest volume of the *Parnasse Contemporain*. Charming little volumes they all were, creamy to the eye and to the mind. But their cream is now the yellow of age, and they mature for the collectors in covers of price.

What futile headaches are between the boards!

Zola and his naturalists are greybeards in every sense, yet it seems not so very long since they went out every day to take the scalps of the sachems of more ancient lodges, and seldom returned without a trophy. They were wont to celebrate their triumphs by feasts in the wigwam of the patron, with much boiled and roast, and still more talk, in the twilight, of that literature of Gautier and his mates, to which they had given the death-blow, and of the other literature which was to take its place. Of this last, "O king, live for ever!" was to be read between the lines on every page. Well, well, where is it now?

But why say more than Mr. Justice Shallow has said already, "All shall die"? And has not Béranger sung the "old clo'" of the warriors who have had their day? The imperious necessity of the new thing drove the disciples themselves into revolt against the master, and one by one they set up rival schools, and demolished him in

epigrammatic prefaces—generally the best things in their books.

For naturalism is by no means to be confounded with naturism, which is one of our later births of time. The schools generate just as the midges do, and each may suffice for its hour. One springs out of the other. "Rousseau," said Tocqueville, "begat Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who begat Châteaubriand, who begat Victor Hugo, who, being tempted of the devil, is begetting every day." It might be put in another way: Zola hunted Hugo, Huysmans hunted Zola, and now Saint-Georges de Bouhélier hunts Huysmans, and with him the Symbolists and the Decadents. This stripling's new pattern for the shop windows is the rehabilitation of virtue and the simplicity of nature—always, of course, of nature as an *article de Paris*—and the re-establishment of the old friendly relations "between the plant, the bird, and the emotion of a man." It is all very well, but it tends to bring literature down to a question of mere procedure, and to reduce its entire priesthood to a gang

of workmen squabbling over the make of their tools. Lemaître is right; if we do not take care letters will become but "a mysterious diversion of mandarins." The peril drew very near when Robert Louis Stevenson tried to reduce the magic of a fine passage from *Troilus and Cressida* to a series of cunning alternations of consonants. Amid all these distracted and distracting novelties we have Brunetière still hitting out for the classical tradition, as Nisard hit out in Hugo's time —striking too short at Zola and the naturalists; at Lemaître and at Anatole France as mere impressionists of criticism; at modern science for its "bankruptcy" in regard to the solution of the mystery of being. He would bring all these innovators under the wholesale tyranny of great critical laws, and teach them that individualism is the enemy, alike in art and faith. No wonder that Edouard Rod, with an equal concern for individualism and for law, is one of the most interesting literary figures of the day.

The literature is backed by the institutions; above all, by the French Academy.

It is an error to suppose that the Academy exists mainly for the purification of the language and for the completion of the dictionary. Its great aim is the production of the normal man of letters, the equipoised personality of wisdom, wit, gravity, gaiety, the harmony of sometimes conflicting opposites which old-fashioned people look for in the perfect writer. This product of fancy is as exquisitely proportioned as a Greek temple. All his powers are subordinate to sovereign reason, working in a medium of good taste. Taste is the enemy of excess, so he has to be not too much of anything, but just exactly enough—a sort of Grandison of the desk.

The attempt to create such a type in its wider application to life at large has been the delight of every age. Newman sketched it with a master hand in his character of the gentleman. The gentleman of his and the British ideal is very much the perfect writer of the French ideal. Our greatest stress of admiration lies in the domain of manners; theirs in the domain of the arts. Newman's great exemplar carefully avoids whatever

may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast. He is against all clashing of opinion, all collision of feeling, all restraint or suspicion or gloom or resentment, his concern being to make everyone at ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, merciful toward the absurd. He guards against unseasonable allusions or topics. He is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself, and, except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort; has no ears for slander or gossip; is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him; interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for argument, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. In short, he is "just so."

Of course, he is only Chesterfield, with

the difference of the application to ethical character; and Chesterfield, it is needless to say, was French to the heart's core. That noble lord's ideal in manners is the Academy's ideal in literary art. His forgotten and overmuch derided letters should be read again as a help to the comprehension of this singular institution, whose concern is the good breeding of style. Where he enjoins dignity of demeanour, and warns against horse-play, romping, loud fits of laughter, jokes, and waggishness in company, the Academy condemns their analogues in books. The man who takes the floor in print is, in the Academy's view, only the buffoon of a larger society than the one that Chesterfield had in his mind. As the good little child of nursery ethics is seen, not heard, so the good little writer of the academic ideal is heard, but not seen. Lie low in self-assertion; disdain to shine by tricks, says the Academy. Whoever is known in company, says my lord, for the sake of any one thing singly, is singly that thing, and will never be considered in any other light. It is the plea for univer-

sals, for balance. Chesterfield's contempt for the man who boasted that he had written for three years with the same pen, and that it was an excellent good one still, is the Academy to a hair. It was an individualising boast, and the grand style knows nothing of individualism. His horror of those who have a constant smirk on the face and a "whiffling" (precious word) activity of the body may be matched by the Academy's horror of the professional humourist. His scorn of proverbs and of cant sayings is the Academy's scorn of cheap and easy reference. His admiration of the man who comes into company without the least bashfulness or sheepishness, but with a modest confidence and ease, is the Academy's admiration of the writer who makes no attempt to recommend his work by tricks of apology, but just leaves it to speak for itself. His pregnant saying that the wise man will live at least twice as much within his wit as within his income is the Academy once more.

That illustrious body, as it is ever represented in French critical literature by some

great pedagogic figure, is constantly rapping the whole class of successful writers over the knuckles, and ordering them to leave off making a noise. It was represented by Nisard when the fierce torrent of romanticism burst over the classic plain; it is represented to-day by Brunetière, who may be figured as some weary schoolmaster flogging an unruly class—flogging till he drops. He has flogged them all in turn—Flaubert, Zola, Daudet, Loti, and Maupassant—yet still, somehow, too much of their lawless riot goes on, with all that he esteems the base trickery of the devices by which they win the kingship of their despicable world. It is nothing to the purpose to say that those he castigates are sometimes of his own household. He would flog half his brother Academicians, if he dared, for their occasional treason to the tradition.

The tragedy of his life is that the balanced man has gone out of fashion, and that the shifting, wayward million has come into the judgment-seat. These lawgivers of an hour, careless of what is true, ever

demand something new, and the popular writer prefers a first place in the meanest village to a second in Rome itself. Tocqueville, who in politics could judge on the evidence, was the slave of tradition in literature. For him the seventeenth century was the last of the great style, and its goose-quill was the true pen of gold. Men wrote for fame, he said, as fame was bestowed by the small but enlightened public. A century later the process of disintegration had begun. Manner took the place of matter; ornament was added, since clearness and brevity were no longer enough. In a succeeding age the ornamental ran into the grotesque, just as the clear style of the old Norman architecture gradually became florid, and ultimately flamboyant. For these principles of liking and of aversion the French Academy stands; on these principles it was created; and, to promote them, it has become a dictionary-maker only as a means to an end. The right word in literature is only its test of the right thing.

Hence the philosophy of the academic

discourse. The occasions of such discourses are easily found. A member dies; another member takes his place. The new-comer has to pronounce a eulogy on his predecessor; a member, deputed by the Academy, pronounces a eulogy on both. It is merely an opportunity of showing by example how a discourse should be written. It is a masterpiece of the most elaborate art. It must not contain a single expression foreign to the usage of the best writers. It must not contain a single thought that is too obtrusive in form or in manner. It must deal with the whole subject as if men dwelt in a paradise of reason, temper, urbanity, taste, and all the virtues, set off by all the graces. It assumes the like perfection in its auditory. The discourse is polished to the last turn—by the writer himself in the first instance, by the Academy in the second—until it shines without glitter, like so much table-talk of the gods.

When M. Dufaure departs this life, early in the eighties, M. Cherbuliez takes his place. M. Cherbuliez pronounces the dis-

course on M. Dufaure. M. Renan, Director of the Academy, replies to M. Cherbuliez. M. Renan, after his wont, is unctuously appreciative, candid, tolerant—in short, everything that human beings might be if they were able to send in specifications for their own make-up before birth. M. Cherbuliez has nothing but nice things to say of M. Dufaure's career in politics and in public life. M. Renan has nothing but nice things to say of M. Cherbuliez for having said them. "M. Dufaure [I do not translate literally] belonged to an age when political life was but a tourney between rivals full of courtesy, who had a perfect understanding in regard to fundamentals. He could make allowance for political opponents. He had none of the spirit of party which was the bane of politics later on. To the eight Beatitudes of the Gospel I am sometimes tempted to add a ninth, 'Happy the blind, for they alone are sure of everything.' We thank you, monsieur, for having set before us, in enduring praise, this generous and noble character," and so on. M. Cherbuliez

was a Swiss who had become a naturalised Frenchman, and had joined his new country shortly after the war. It was necessary to say as much with discretion and with taste. "How well you chose your hour, monsieur, to attach yourself anew to a country from which you had been separated by a fatal error of the politics of the past! The issue of one of our Protestant families, compelled two centuries ago to choose between their nationality and their freedom of thought, you have always cherished an affectionate sentiment for the land of your fathers. While France prospered that was enough for you. But there came a moment when this venerable mother, abandoned by those who owed her most, had to bear the taunt, 'She saved others; herself she cannot save.' On that day, when ingratitude became one of the laws of the world, you felt a new love for your country of the past, and you consecrated your talent to a vanquished cause."

The thing is said, in a certain sense, just for the sake of saying it, and no one cares

to apply to it the test of sincerity, so long as it bears the test of expression. The Academy exists to get it said well, and to set off precept by example. The one condition, the one sovereign obligation, is the grand style, the grand manner. At another time the author of the *Dame aux Camélias* discourses on virtue at the distribution of the Montyon prizes. His tongue may be in his cheek all the while, but it does not spoil his accent, and that is enough.

The evil is that the Academy has brought this solicitude for form so far that some who live by its laws have hardly a word to bless themselves with. They are like those masters of fence who are afflicted with a sort of paralysis of the power to attack. With the everlasting refinement of style, the writing of Academic French has become the labour of a lifetime. You had better say nothing than say anything less than perfectly well. Hence a misunderstanding between the Academy and the world that is very much like the misunderstanding between the Church and the world. The Academy is apt to be

remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow in regard to the time-spirit as it moves. It clutches now and then at the skirts of a celebrity just to show that it is not altogether out of the running, but in its heart of hearts it would fain do without him, and resume its quietism of the worship of ancestors. It recognises no books that are not formally sent in for its approval. It never seeks out a work, but waits until the author invites a judgment; and if he is too proud or too modest to present himself before the judgment-seat, it leaves him without notice. Hence, as M. Zola complained, in a notable diatribe, it affects ignorance of nearly the whole body of contemporary literature. Only the mediocrities, it is said, send in for the ceremony of the "coronation," and, necessarily, none but they receive the crown. With all this, the Academy is true, after a fashion, to the purpose of its being—the production of the perfect gentleman of the printed page, a perfect gentleman, it may be remarked, who enjoys a good deal of latitude of manners when out of his uniform of pen and ink.

The drama and music are other great interests backed by other great institutions. The State does just as much for them as it does for the vine, the beet, or the codfish. It subventions them, when needful, keeps them in good technical repair. It helps the stage of Paris by helping the Franaçis and the Odéon, as also the Conservatoire in the dramatic department of that multiplex personality. These things in France are of such as go on for ever. For all that, there are changes, and the most wholesome of them is that the actor is rapidly acquiring a proper social status. He has yet to acquire it fully; to this day, in this land of players, the player is still under a ban. Many affect to regard him as merely a *cabotin*—a stroller, or barn-stormer, to wit. Of course they do it only when they are angry, and when they do it they know that they are doing wrong.

When Octave Mirbeau, forgetful of the time of day, once wrote an insolent attack on the profession, a hundred challenges came to him by return of post, and he

seemed to stand in a ring of swords that were by no means the toys of the property-room. Yet there was quite a commotion in the Legion of Honour when Got, the veteran of the Français, received the cross—Got, who had done so very much for French culture and happiness. However, it frightened the minister, and he held back a like decoration which Got's comrade, Delaunay, thought he had every right to expect. The disappointed artist took strong measures. He announced his retirement, and began to give farewell performances. The Français could not do without him, and the repentant minister had to come down in a hurry and decorate him behind the scenes. Perhaps the highest register of recognition was attained when Coquelin was seen arm in arm with Gambetta at the height of his power.

The new state of things has its attendant evils. If you bring the actor into the great world he naturally wishes to live according to its laws, and that costs money. A fine house, a dainty picture-gallery — Coquelin

has one of the choicest in this line—and stylish entertainments are essentially things of price. So, of late years, there has been a tendency among leading actors to break away from the Français, or to introduce the starring system, for their own benefit, into the House of Molière. The old system—happily, it ought rather to be called the still existing one—was altogether against that practice. The company was a community, and, though there were some differences in the pay according to talent and standing, all full members shared profits in due proportion. They were theoretically equal, and sometimes the most distinguished of them gave practical proof of it by taking the humblest parts. Once in the brotherhood you were never to be out of it, except by your own default of conduct or desire. You could look forward to a pension and a handsome lump sum on retirement, and the bonus made a substantial addition to your salary.

Sarah Bernhardt was the first to tire of this. She listened to the tempter who in-

vited her to star for her own benefit in the four quarters of the globe, and she broke loose from the great house by the simple process of breaking her engagement. The administration sued her; she was cast in heavy damages; she never paid them, and she never came back. Coquelin, tempted in the same way, quarrelled with his mates because they denied him long vacations, which it was notorious he meant to use by starring on his own account.

It is to be hoped that the present reconstruction of the Français may include some better provision for the security of the historic treasures. They symbolise the history of the French stage in their paintings, engravings, drawings, marbles, each a memory of a rich and glorious past. The mere historical properties are worthy of a State museum. The walking-sticks have been actual playthings of generations of dandies who have lived for "the nice conduct of a clouded cane." The bell that sounds the death-knell in *Marion Delorme* is fabled as the very bell that gave the signal for

the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The armchair in which Molière had his fatal seizure while playing in his own piece is still used in *Le Malade Imaginaire.* The company of such a house is bound to take itself seriously, and this one does so. At a rehearsal of *Ruy Blas* I once saw them dispute by the hour as to the particular way in which a handkerchief should be dropped and a handkerchief picked up again. When Mounet-Sully was disposed to be a little too noisy in an invocation to a departed spirit, he was reminded that it was hopeless to attempt to call the hero from his grave. They still play the *Malade* on an almost absolutely bare stage, just as they did when it was written, but in many of the modern pieces they now condescend to fine scenery. The late M. Sarcey was for ever worrying the administration on this point, and at last they met him half-way, but still only half. The decorations are always kept in a certain classic subordination to the text and the playing. The "fashionable night," when the best seats are let to [illegible]is who are known

by their names rather than by their works, is another concession to the spirit of the age. In the old days every night was a night of really noteworthy people who had dropped in, not to be seen, but only to see the play. A first night at the Français is still what it has ever been, one of the most wonderful scenes of civilised life.

The other State theatre in Paris, the Odéon, occupies a lower rank. It is sometimes used as a sort of half-way house between the Français and the outer world, where plays or authors on which the greater institution has its eye may be tried without a compromise of dignity. With this view M. Antoine, the actor-manager of the Théâtre Libre, was once made director of the Odéon. He represented much that the Français hated, but the public were beginning to take to him, and it was thought prudent to give him a trial. He had an idea of a totally new kind of drama—realistic, naturalistic, or what not—in which the stage was to be little more than an enlarged photograph of actual life, with humdrum verities

just as they pass. This was a reaction against the highly wrought constructive drama of Sardou, and the still more highly wrought philosophical drama of Dumas, wherein everything is arranged to a given end. The Français itself, I remember, toyed with the innovation by mounting a piece of Henri Becque called *Les Corbeaux*, which was all but sterile of incident, and as tailless as a Manx cat. There was no end to speak of and no plot, except that a rascally lawyer, who had ruined a family, took a fancy to one of the daughters and won her, though she despised him with all her heart. She married just to save the others, and the exasperating curtain fell without any reward of virtue or punishment of vice. The author's theory was that so things happened in real life. He was equally faithful to reality in the dialogue, which seldom rose above utter commonplace.

It did not answer. But Antoine, who was of Becque's school, had better fortune, owing to the startling novelty of his histrionic method. He held that character should be

represented, not in its many-sidedness, but in its dominant note, and that this insistent *Leitmotiv* should be kept remorselessly before the audience in every detail of the performance. Since then there have been all sorts of other experiments — in dramatic symbolism, dramatic mysticism, and anything else you please. Such things may be right or wrong, but they are the life of art, as laboratory work is the life of science. The artist who has ceased to be curious has entered upon his decline.

Music is cared for in much the same way. The French Opera is not merely for performances. It is an Academy of Music, and that is its full title. It is subventioned by the State as one of the great teaching institutions—a sort of school of application for the Conservatoire. The house is something of a white elephant, for its keep is dear. It has sometimes ruined directors who have held under the State on the system of a public grant in aid for expenses, supplemented by their own private investments. The State makes too many conditions. The

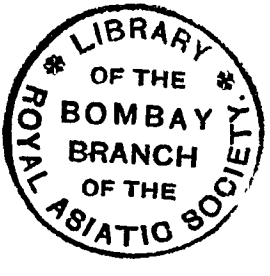
Opera has too many privileges. The building itself entails enormous expense, and its palatial splendours are by no means confined to the front of the house. The greenroom of the dance is a marvel of painting, carving, and all the allied arts. The ballets themselves are an essential part of the performance, for the Opera is a school of dancing as well as a school of music. They are great illustrative dramas in pantomime, resuming a whole history or a whole epoch of manners.

The Conservatory of Music is managed in much the same way as the School of Fine Arts. The students get the best teaching in the world. They, too, have their Prix de Rome, or great travelling studentship, and they compete for it by an *entrée en loge.* They are shut up for some days in close custody for the composition of a cantata, and the winning piece is finally performed at the Institute. Some of the greatest musicians of the time take the classes, or sit in judgment on the work. It is sometimes a tedious task, as one and the same composition is rendered over and over again by successive

students. Auber, it was said, used to sit up the whole night before the competition, just to sharpen his appetite for sleep for the following afternoon. It is not true, though that consideration, of course, has scarcely any place in the ethics of anecdote. Its defect lies in the falsity to character and circumstance. The note of the race is its devotion to art. Art is almost the only real priesthood left in France, and by that, or nothing, Frenchmen hope to be saved. In its various forms it is regarded as a working substitute for religion. It probably is not, in the full measure in which they pin their faith to it; but that is nothing to the purpose. They think it is. It might become so if they suffered it to recover its old alliance with moral ideals. But they have banished these from the partnership, forgetting that mere exercises in virtuosity can never suffice to the spirit of man. The point is that, in things which they regard as serious, the French are among the most serious and purposeful peoples in the world. Their position in literature, in painting, in music, in the

sciences, is theirs by no accident. They work for it with their whole heart and soul, and adapt means to ends as patiently as the maker of a watch. They are a people founded in institutions, and whenever they come to grief it is only because the institutions have got out of repair. The fate reserved for them in the providence of God is God's own secret. Whatever it may be, they may say with Dryden, in his noble paraphrase—

"Not Heaven itself upon the past has power;
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour."



PARIS OF THE FAUBOURGS

IV.

PARIS OF THE FAUBOURGS

PARIS being a great manufacturing city, its plebs have naturally had the ambition to rule the roast. This is what has given it the importance it has had all through French history. Multiply the natural quickness of the race into the development of that quickness by the practice of the skilled crafts, and this product again into the sense of great events ever passing on a great stage, and you have, in the colossal result, the medium in which the Paris man in the street has ever moved. He is the heir of the ages of the most stimulating suggestions of glory and power. So fashioned, like the Athenian of old, he has naturally come to regard himself as a sort of centre of things. He is one to whom the making of a new

constitution for his country, or, for that matter, for the human race, is the easiest thing in the world.

Hence the self-importance of the faubourgs from a very early stage of their history. The word is used here, not in its etymological sense of a suburb, an outskirt, a part without the gates, but, on the contrary, of a part that has come very much within them as the city has enlarged its boundaries. Nor, even in this sense, does it apply to those faubourgs which are still the haunt of the richer class. The faubourg of my theme is any part to which the poor have been pushed from the centre to the circumference, or shut out from the centre on their invading march from the outside. Even in this sense it is still hardly to be regarded as a geographical expression, and is not much more than a conventional term. Wherever the toilers and the small folk of every social category are gathered together there you have a faubourg "within the meaning of the Act." The great manufacturing plain of St. Denis is still a faubourg

beyond the walls, but it has a street of the faubourg within them.

The faubourg has ever played its part with the most perfect good faith. Its successive generations have been animated by the hope of ultimate success in the invention of a perfect governmental machine. This contrivance is to do the trick for the regeneration of mankind by a device as simple as that of putting a penny in the slot. It is to turn out equality, fraternity, and even liberty itself, as a kind of bonus, by an automatic process that precludes the need of personal exertion. The convenience of this arrangement is that it is less concerned with the conduct of the regenerators than with the conduct of those who are to be regenerated. You look after your neighbour, and allow yourself a reasonable exemption from watchfulness as inventor's royalty.

The people of the faubourgs, the humble folk generally—small traders and small annuitants, as well as workmen—like all the rest of us, are the product of their surroundings. They are shaped by the private life

and by the public life, by the street and the home. These people in Paris owe a great deal to the public life. It condescends to their needs for colour, variety, movement, in a way universal among the Latin nations. Out of doors is merely their larger home, and they expect to find adequate provision there for every kind of enjoyment. Our own race tends to regard that domain as a mere thoroughfare between the workshop and the fireside, where all our interests are centred. If it serves that purpose that is about all we ask of it. It may be as ugly as it likes, and, within certain limits of indulgence, almost as dirty. To the Frenchman it is more than a place of transit; it is almost a place of sojourn.

So the Parisian common man has his share of the Champs-Elysées and of the boulevards in his freedom of access to their fountains and promenades and their bordering alleys of tender green. He comes downstairs to them, so to speak, as soon as the scavengers have done their timely work. He descends to his thoroughfare as the millionaire expects

to descend to his breakfast-room or his study, with all its appointments fresh from the broom, and shining in their brightness of metal and glass. So, whatever the gloom of the domestic prospect, his street helps him to feel good. The beauty of the statuary, of the public buildings, is a means to the same end. For nothing, the poorest of poor devils may see the glorious bronzes in the terrace garden of the Tuileries, the outdoor figures of the Luxembourg, the great horses of the Place de la Concorde, the magnificent compositions of the Arch. The very lamp-post that will light his way at nightfall serves the purpose of a thing of beauty all through the day. Compare it with the English bar of cast-iron, hideous to the eye in form and colour, foul with the mudstains of years of traffic. The Frenchman must have it suave and shapely in its lines, a model of good Renaissance ornament in its decorations, bronze in its material, and washed and polished every week or so to keep it smart.

Extend this difference in the point of view

to the whole public scene, and one can understand why the street is the distinctive thing in Paris. The very plans for the houses have to pass municipal muster. You build as you please only within certain limits, and your right of purchase includes no licence of monstrosity. The very letters in which you advertise your name and business must be in gold-leaf, at any rate, in the principal thoroughfares. Compare the obelisk of the Place de la Concorde with the obelisk of the Thames Embankment—the first standing clean and clear-cut on its fine pedestal, with its whole message like a sheet of print to anyone who knows the character; the other begrimed with the London soot, and with the fine figures at its base bearing innumerable traces of their degradation of use as a playground for the hobnailed urchins. The Parisian has looked on such things from his earliest infancy. He has never, except by pure mischance, looked on anything that is not beautiful in the public domain. The very house-fronts must be scraped for him into their original tint of

still cream every two or three years. He is born to a splendid tradition of culture in the principles of taste. The poorest wretch who munches his crust in the open sees nothing that is not fine, whatever his luck in his nightly lair. For all the daylight hours he may be as lucky in that respect as the porter in the halls of Sindbad. And he has the equivalent of the purse of sequins in his share of the millions that have been spent on his morning promenade, from the shady Bois, at one end of the prospect, to the tiniest garden that gives him an oasis of comfort on his way to the gate of Vincennes, at the other.

The boulevard is all life, and well-nigh all beauty, in the stately frontages—beauty of high art at Barbédienne's and in the picture-shops, beauty of texture and dyes, of fine craftsmanship in a thousand articles of luxury, in the others. Especially is it all life. The appeal to the fancy and the imagination is not to be missed in its insistency. The kiosks give our quidnunc a sense of all-abounding vitality. Here the

hawkers shout their latest sensation from the uttermost ends of the earth, new editions piping hot with nothing in them, and yet with everything in their power of providing for the passing moment, which is the all in all. His enemies, home and foreign, are caricatured in the gaudy-coloured prints. The soldiers pass, the idlers take their afternoon absinthe. It is a pageant which does not depend for its effect on the consideration whether you see it from a bench on the trottoir or from a fauteuil under the awning, for, thanks to the municipal foliage, the bench is shaded just as pleasantly as the chair.

The general result gives every beholder to the manner born the sense that he is a citizen of no mean city. If the appeal lies too directly to the sensations and too little to the reflective part, that need not count. The creature, at any rate, lives in every nerve, and his tendency to go off half primed in every fugitive fancy entails no personal inconvenience, since, in the long run, it is France that pays. This is the street of our

proletarian of the Latin races. You see it, with differences which are only local, in Barcelona and in Seville, in Florence and in Naples. It is a place made for the waking hours, the sleeping quarters being very much of an accident, as they were in old Rome.

Still the question remains, "What sort of home does he go home to?" It is not a bad one if he is a Parisian of the working class. The wife is still apt to be the angel of the house in cleanliness, neatness, and management, and she runs no risk of losing her wings by taking to drink. The poorer classes throughout the world have to make their choice between the life out of doors and the life within. Even with the help of the angel in the house, the Parisian workman is but poorly off. She can but do her best in her domain, and when that domain is only one half or one quarter story out of seven, she can hardly be called a controller of events.

The family of the faubourg is still too commonly lodged in the tenement-house,

and that house in Paris wants what it wants pretty much everywhere else. It towers to the sky, though in comparison with the elevations common in Chicago and in New York it is an ant-hill. It gets light and air for the back rooms from a fetid court. Its sanitary arrangements—but why insist? See one of these places in any latitude, and you see them in all the broad earth. This is no new thing. Paris has built in the air for generations. New York probably learned the trick from her as a grain of the wisdom brought home in the close fist of "Poor Richard" on his return from abroad. All the old fortified cities built in the air—built high and built narrow, so as to lessen the circuit of the walls. In its origin it is rather ancient need than modern greed. To this day some of the highest houses and the narrowest streets of Paris are to be found in the old quarters near the Institute, and by no means a hundred miles from the Rue de Seine and the Rue du Bac. The latter was once a real "street of the brook"—a brook gradually fouled into a gutter, and running

so fouled within the memory of many now living.

The contrast in the workmen's homes is between the fairly neat and well-ordered interiors and the abominations that begin at the staircase. Our race strives more for the amenity and the independence of the small house. Within the fortifications of Paris the small house is almost unknown, the yard or garden-patch, as the possession of a single family, quite unknown. There are great possibilities in the small house, if you choose to make the best of them, and there is still the individualised independence dear to the Anglo-Saxon, even if you make the worst. The hideous neglect of cleanliness and beauty in the public domain, in the poorer quarters of London, is one result of the difference of conditions. The poor man is content to find nothing attractive in the thoroughfares, because there is his own "little bit of a place" at the journey's end. As the great model lodging-houses multiply, however, he is losing this compensation. His demand for its equivalent out of doors

is therefore beginning to tell in the labours of the County Council for the planting of gardens, and for the merely decorative improvement of the streets.

The poor man of the Latin race met smiling on the promenades seems to say, "Please don't follow me home." His nights, then, are something of a terror if his days are a delight. One is reminded of the choice presented to fancy in the nursery tale. Under which fairy will you take service—the one who gives a waking experience of every kind of happiness, with a sleeping life of all the horrors of nightmare, or the other, who offers the experience the other way about? Be careful how you choose offhand. The Frenchman of the great cities may sleep in a cupboard after roaming all day in a pleasance.

The workman lives in a barrack. The small house has vanished. Sheer necessity has compelled the builders to forget the Stoic warning against raising the roofs of the houses instead of the souls of the citizens. The evil is that rich and poor now dwell

by tribes, each in its own quarter. The very poor are in one ward, the half poor in another, and so on until you reach districts where it is all millionaire. In the old days the poor of Paris, like the poor of London, abode all over the place. It was the lower part of the house for the rich, the upper part for the less prosperous, but the whole social order under one roof. There have been many laws to amend this state of things in France, one of the earliest of the modern dating from 1850. It failed because it was permissive. It is thought that the State should make some gigantic effort to house everybody in the right way. The money might be found in the savings-bank fund, now amounting in paper to between two and three thousand millions of francs. But where is the savings-bank fund? Nobody can say. It is distributed all over the surface of French finance. It has served as a sort of lucky-bag into which the embarrassed minister dips when he is at a loss for a balance. Some fear national bankruptcy on this issue alone,

and another revolution as bad as the first. For all the years since the beginning of the century these thrifty and industrious people have been pouring their savings into the hands of the State, in the sure and certain hope of finding them at call. They could not find them in the lump, and a panic might have the most fearful consequences.

Then, money or no money, where will you build? It is impossible to continue the invasion of the skies, so there is nothing for it but lateral extension. Why not take the fortifications, just as they have already done in Vienna, raze the walls, fill the ditches, and make a workmen's zone? The scheme is feasible. It would put the people on the circumference of Paris within striking distance of the centre or of the suburbs. But it supposes a good civic railway system, and, happily, there is just a beginning of this in the new line (another legacy of the Exhibition) which runs through the city from east to west. It has boldly burrowed under the Champs-Elysées, and it

takes the narrower road by the Rue de Rivoli.

Without this and a good deal more of the same kind Paris would soon be impossible. The omnibus system, even with its enormous supplementary force of the tramways, has completely broken down as a service for the needs of this vast population; for Paris grows worse overcrowded than ever, owing to the work for the Exhibition, and, indeed, to the rebuilding generally. This brings up thousands from all parts of the country, and most of them come to stay. Some, like the masons, come only for the summer work, and in the winter go back to their villages. While they are here they lodge in wretched *garnis*, or furnished lodgings, like Chinese, sleeping no one quite knows how many in a room.

Of eight hundred and twenty-five thousand habitations, great and small, six hundred thousand are at a yearly rental below five hundred francs, or say twenty pounds. Of course by habitations I do not mean separate houses, but merely separate dwellings of any

and every sort. Think of what this means, and of how little in the way of house-room and of the decencies of domestic life those who pay so little can expect. But there is worse behind. Some habitations are below twelve pounds. This surely cannot give the right to much more than a cupboard, and a very dirty cupboard at that. Nor is this the lowest depth. I have seen the rag-pickers in shanties with mere ground for the floor. In one and the same hut they sorted the filth, housed the family, worked, cooked, and slept, were born, and died. An infant, who had just gone through the former process, lay in its cradle in one corner, and beside the cradle was a crib, where two others slept; a bed for father, mother, and yet an infant more, occupied another corner. Rags, bones, broken bottles, and bits of rusty iron completed the furniture.

This is all the more trying in Paris, because in their work the Parisians are a highly domesticated folk. Wherever they can do it they work at home. The hardest

thing in the world is to bring the artificial-flower makers into a factory. All the fine taste of these girls seems to go out of them when you range them in rows. What they like is to be left in their own garrets and to feign nature at their ease with a modelling-tool and a tinted rag. It is, in one view, the French passion for little industries of all kinds. They put off the evil day of machinery as long as they can. Whole districts are still cultivated with the spade. Many Parisian industries depend only less on hand labour than the Japanese.

This is specially the case in the toy trade —a considerable item in the exports of France. All those fanciful creations which are the delight of the boulevards on the 1st of January are more or less traceable to dismal back rooms, looking out on walls of giant buildings which know no visitation of the sun. Even where the curious industry is established on the larger scale it still has something domestic in its character. There may be twenty people under a master as petty as themselves, but they still have to

contrive to work in the master's lodgings. He finds room somehow, and as they turn out of his impoverished workshop he turns in to go to bed. In this medium, and in this medium only, his serene spirit works at its ease in inventions for the toy market. Here he elaborates his wonderful buzzing bees and skipping monkeys, his industrious mechanical mice that creep up a string and down a string, and all the rest of it. A popular toy is a fortune. The man who first found out how to make a puppet walk, with his girl on his arm and his poodle-dog in leash, must long since have retired in affluence. A thousand considerations of policy and prudence affect this industry. Political toys are of no use except for the purely Parisian market, and the inventor strikes both for that and for the export trade. For the latter, the non-political puppet with the poodle elbows the heroes out of the field.

Many of the great manufacturing houses try to lodge their own workpeople in comfort and decency. At the iron works of Creusot

they make endless efforts of this sort, and are, on the whole, fairly successful. The working-class city founded by Jean Dolfus at Mulhouse is a wonderful creation. The well-known Phalanstère de Guise is a sort of Republic of Plato, or Utopia of More, adapted to working-class needs. These philosophic employers of labour, who have tried to rear men as others rear pheasants, have a good deal to show for their pains, in settlements in which every one, down to the humblest, is lodged in a way that differentiates the human being from the brute.

These are the industrial experiments. Then there are the religious ones. That revivalist movement in the Catholic Church, which began after the Franco-Prussian War, is very active in the industrial domain. The Church tried to turn the moral of the dread catastrophe entirely to its own profit. It has just completed its monumental temple at Montmartre, visible from every quarter of the city, and designed to warn the populace for ever and for ever of the wickedness of the Commune, and of the need of intercessory

prayers. In the same way it has started all over the country workmen's clubs "to combat democracy and infidelity"—clubs which are intended to procure work for the faithful from the faithful, and which put the poor and pious tailor in the way of mending the breeches of the Catholic millionaire. These have some success, though the artisan, as a rule, fights shy of them and regards their members with the utmost scorn. They give free social entertainments, not to say free lunches, all on the easy condition of a due submission to the powers that be, both in Church and State.

Connected with the religious organisations is the scheme of cheap houses. There is a great society for the building of *habitations à bon marché*, and it does good work, but still on what seems to me the unsatisfactory basis of charity. Some of its houses are built on the conception that a small house and garden belong to the natural state of civilised man. This idea, of course, can be carried out only in the country, where space is not so precious. At Auteuil there is a

whole street of *maisonnettes* of this description, and of three-story houses in which two or more families may lodge in comfort and decency on the tenement system. With these, and forming part of the scheme, is a co-operative store, where the tenants get nearly all necessaries at cost price. There are other dwellings of the same society at St. Denis, the great manufacturing plain beyond the walls, and in other parts of France.

But the dwelling-house is only one of the conditions. The workshop is another. In fact, where you work is perhaps more important than where you lodge, for there you spend the greater part of your time under one roof. A good deal has been done by legislative and administrative supervision to put the workshops in a healthier state. All this, however, is to be judged by the standard of the country, and it must be confessed that in certain matters the French standard is not high. Workshops that would pass muster in France as being quite on the improved plan would be considered by other

communities as only less objectionable than a Kaffir kraal. You are to bear in mind that it is an old country, and that it does all things in a more or less old-fashioned way. Its own idea that it is the newest of the new is merely its fun. The apprenticeship laws abound in all sorts of quaint provisions. Boys and girls are to have one day's rest a week, though the day is not fixed. There are strict regulations as to the weight of burdens that may be carried by the apprentice, according to sex and age.

Then there is another sobering influence in the question of wages. The skilled workman in the Department of the Seine—that is to say, in Paris and its neighbourhood—earns from six to eight francs a day. This is only the average. It means much higher wages for some in the highly skilled and purely artistic trades, and much lower wages for others. The same kind of workmen earn from four to five francs in the provinces. This may serve to mark the difference in the proportion throughout. The lowest paid—the unskilled in the country—earn from two

to three francs a day; the same class, of course, take relatively higher wages in the capital. There is a sort of middle term of the half-skilled trades, ranging in earnings between the two. All these rates, low as they are, represent an increase of a hundred per cent. in the last fifty years. Of course they have to be considered strictly in relation to their purchasing power, which is fairly high. If the French workman lived now exactly as he lived half a century ago the cost of living would be only twenty-five per cent. higher as against the hundred per cent. of income. But his claim in living has naturally gone up. He wants better things, so his actual outlay is doubled. The net result, however, is an enormous increase in well-being. If in one way he receives more only to spend more, the more he spends now gives him comforts undreamed of in the philosophy of his grandfather. Watch him at his midday meal at the *brasserie*, and you will see that he is fairly well provided with food. He gets a better dinner—a dinner with more meat in it, and less onion

and thin soup—than his father had. It is meat, if only meat of a kind.

The purchasing power of wages is increased to the utmost by the excellent system of markets. They are a wholesome survival of the old economy in which there was no middleman. The country-folk brought their wares into town, and the townspeople went to buy them. That system obtains almost in its primitive simplicity in the Paris of to-day. All over the city there are local markets which are supplied directly by the growers in the suburbs. Here you may meet all classes—the workman's wife and the smart young housekeeper, followed by her servant who carries the basket. The city dues have, of course, to be reckoned in the cost. There is the charge of the *octroi* at the gates, and there are the market charges; but, with all this, the buyer gains a good deal by not having to go to a costly shop. The *octroi* is a survival that promises to be perpetual. The French people will not endure direct taxation. They will pay to any extent through the nose, but it is hateful to them to have to

put their hands into their pockets and bring out a substantial sum for any public service. You have to take toll of them in advance by laying a charge on everything they eat, drink, or wear. It is only the ha'penny or the penny in the franc which they don't miss. It is just the same in their contributions to charity. They are seldom capable of writing a cheque in cold blood, but they will do anything in reason, or in unreason, to see a charity performance, or to buy a trinket at a charity bazaar.

Most foreigners who study the markets generally make the mistake of going to the great central establishment of the Halles. It is wonderful, of course, but the smaller markets give one a clearer insight into the true civic life. The Halles is the place for the supply of the great shops, and the greater part of its trade is really wholesale. Its twenty-two acres, its two or three thousand stalls, its twelve hundred cellars, are on a scale that precludes profitable observation. It is a wondrous scene, but so are all great markets of the kind. The carts rumble

along all the night through from the market-gardens with freights of eatables, alive or dead, that give one a positive horror of the human appetite. It is a still more awful sight at the cattle market at La Villette, with its six thousand oxen, its nine thousand calves and pigs, its twenty-five thousand sheep, marching in every Monday and Thursday to fill the insatiable maw of Paris. Most of these are brought in by the river port of La Villette.

The great wine market is another extraordinary sight, and with its thousands of barrels ranged along the quays it reminds one of the Lilliputian preparations for a meal of Gulliver. Near this market is a wonderfully good restaurant, almost wholly unknown to the general diner in Paris, but exceedingly well known to the prosperous wine-merchants who visit this remote quarter to trade. There are such restaurants, good, and little known to the outsider, near most of the great markets. The Pied de Mouton, in the neighbourhood of the Halles, is a famous one, and its cellar is one of the best

in Paris. There is another overlooking the neighbouring square in which stands the beautiful fountain by Jean Goujon.

So the French workman is the creature of the street for the sense of the joy of life, and the creature of the home and the workshop for the sense of the hardship, and sometimes of the sorrow. Fashioned as he is in this way, two outside forces contend for the possession of him. The question of questions is, Will he take his guidance from the recognised agencies within the law, or from the agencies of revolt? The State, and also, as we have seen, the Church, offer him all sorts of bribes and bonuses to consent to work in their way. They recognise his trade and self-help societies. They try to get him to the altar as a devotee, and to the urn as a voter. But he has heard of Utopias, and he longs to have one more struggle for absolute perfection at short notice, though he may have to lay down his life in the attempt. The key to modern French history is to be found here. Every political movement has to be a compromise

between the aspirations of the faubourg and the world as it wags. The French workman has been bred in the belief in revolution as a recognised agency of progress, and by instinct and habit he loathes second-best. The old order offers him the churches, the thrift and benefit societies, co-operation, insurance against accidents, education, technical and other—the old political economy, in a word, and the paternal state. The new whispers socialism, the Commune, anarchy sometimes, and with these the barricade.

The societies of mutual help form an enormous force on the side of the established order. Their numbers are counted by thousands; their capital is over a hundred million francs. Some are "municipal," and this means they are helped by public funds. In this instance they give help in sickness only. The "professional," those formed without such help among the crafts themselves, give aid to men out of work, and sometimes pensions to the aged and infirm. The State "approves" those of the first type, and only "authorises" the others.

The savings-banks have been under Government patronage for the better part of one century, or, to carry it still further back to the origin of the Society of Deposits, for more than three. The organisation of that petty thrift which is the foundation of national wealth dates from a decree of Henry III. issued in 1578.

The co-operative movement in France has two aspects, and one of them is revolutionary. The wilder spirits are always trying to capture co-operation, as it was captured in 1848, for the national workshops. Their aim is the forcible abolition of the middleman—in one word, of the boss. The more thoughtful are content to work out their own salvation by the slower processes of thrift, self-denial, and self-control. The revolutionary line is indicated by what was once the great superiority of the productive over the distributive societies. The workmen wanted to begin at the beginning by getting hold of the workshops. Everything, they said to themselves, is, at first, a thing made, and if they and they alone could

make it, the question of distribution would already be half solved. The less theoretical English workman was content to take the thing as made—no matter by what agency of the lordship of capital—and to buy it at the cheapest rate for distribution to the consumer. The French seem slowly coming round to that view. At any rate, the consuming societies are now very far in excess of the others. As it is, they have no affinity with the English trading-stores, which virtually sell to everybody, and they are compelled to confine their operations strictly to the circle of membership.

On the other hand, some of the productive societies are highly prosperous, and under the republican system they get a share of the Government work. Two societies of printers used to have the contract for the *Journal Officiel*, and, for aught I know to the contrary, have it to this day. The relations of all these societies with the State are regulated by a special bureau, very much to the disgust of the "clubs of social studies," who want to be as free as air.

The play of the two opposing forces of liberty and authority is incessant in this as in every other institution in France. Co-opération now moves all along the line, not only in manufactures, but in agriculture, for cheap houses and for cheap loans. A newer type is one in which masters and workmen combined, each contributing their capital, large or small, and sharing benefits, of course in proportion to the amount of their subscription. This, it was hoped, would bring co-operation into the department of "grand industry," and provide for the purchase of extensive and costly plant. But it has not had much success owing to constant discussion between the workmen and the syndicate, and there is now a tendency to revert to the earlier system of small co-operators providing everything for themselves.

The man who has tried most to make the social movement evolutionary, instead of revolutionary, is the Comte de Chambrun. He is the great patron of the co-operative movement, and he has given his money and

his time to it. In nights of insomnia great waking thoughts that were better than visions came to him, and urged him to make himself useful to his kind. So the "Social Museum" of his creation is now a Government department, where you may study every branch of the subject with the aid of one of the best special libraries in the world. His Temple of Humanity at the Exhibition had two doors. One bore the date of the expiring century, and was labelled "Salary"; the other the date of the century to come, with the title "Association." France has scores of men of this sort all working to the same end by different means, some of them revolutionary. They live on the air of generous hopes for their kind. Edmond Potonié, whom I used to know, sacrificed the succession to a large business to live on a fifth floor at the East End and promote the cause of universal peace. The brothers Réclus—one of them the great geographer, who was just saved from the worst after the Commune by a memorial widely signed throughout the world—were for blood and

fire. Yves Guyot, journalist, ex-minister, and a man of perfect honour and integrity all through, is a free-trader of the old school. His life has been in a mild sort of way a martyrdom, because he insists on the perfect harmony of interests between labour and capital. This is ever the great line of division between the two schools. In labour insurance, for instance, one school cries, "State-aid," and the other, "Self-help." The State-aid schools stand for the taxation of wealth, the Self-help schools for frugality. The new law is received with only partial favour by the advanced party.

It is the same in technical education. Nobody disputes the need of it, but many think that the old guild schools were the best. The municipality, however, has long had possession of the greater part of the field, and it does wonders in training the poorest children in those principles of taste which come by nature, in the first place, to the majority of Frenchmen. A municipal crafts-school is a wonderful sight. The pupils

study high art, in its application to all the superior industries, without spending a penny for the best teaching in the world. They draw, model, and paint from the best examples. They are the pick of the elementary schools, where drawing is one of the subjects, though naturally it is taught only in its elements; but whenever special aptitude is shown, the higher school seeks the parents out, and takes counsel with them as to the propriety of giving the pupil a chance in one of the art trades. If all goes well the child is sent to the school. If the earlier promise is not fulfilled, the parents are again warned that they had better think of something else. If it is fulfilled, the school does its very best for three or four years. Then one of the great art houses in bronze or marble or stone carving or engraving, or some other of the many applied arts, makes an opening for the new hand. Fame and, in a modest way, fortune is the next step. This, and this alone, is the secret of the French supremacy in the precious metals. It comes by no accident; it is the result of

a careful selection of the fittest at every stage.

The wives and womankind generally of the labouring class are a great force on the side of the domestic virtues. The well-brought-up Frenchwoman of whatever class is order, method, thrift, and industry personified. If a representative goddess of these virtues were wanted, there she is ready to hand. Within her degree she is, as I have said, neat from top to toe, well-shod, trim in her attire. Within the same limit of opportunity she is notoriously a good cook. She will work early and late. Her children rise up and call her blessed as they put on the shirts and stockings which she has mended overnight. Strong drink is a vice almost unknown to her experience in so far as it is one affecting her own sex. So far as I know there is no analogue in France to the British matron of the working class who tipples at the public-house bar. It is an insistent fancy of mine that the Frenchwoman, both for good and ill, is the stronger of the sex

combination for the whole race. Like the person in the nursery rhyme, when she is bad she is horrid, because of the will and the mental power that she puts into her aberrations. But when she is good—and she is generally so (for in all life, thank Heaven! the averages are usually on the right side)—she is a treasure. She keeps the poor man's home straight.

Her daughter grows up like her, with the most elementary notions as to rights and pleasures, with the sternest notions as to duties. The home is, of course, the best nursery of these virtues, and I could wish that the girl had never to pass its bounds for the indiscriminate companionship of the factory. She has been taught to look for a sort of maternal initiative in all things, and she is apt to feel like a corporal's file without its corporal when she stands alone. She is not so well fortified as the English—above all, as the American—girl by pride in her self-reliance. She is best where she best likes to be—at home. After all, the best of factories is only the second-best of this

ministrant sex, as the best of crèches, where one day, I suppose, the cradles will be rocked by steam-power, is only second-best for her baby brother or sister. Both are very much better than nothing; no more can be said. In France, as in England, the workman's ideal is to keep the woman at home.

These in their sum are the great steadying influences that correct the boulevard and the wine-shop for the French working man. They also correct the platforms of the revolution. Where they are not well developed he is apt to run a little wild. His parting of the ways points to thrift, toil, hardship, on the one hand; on the other, to revolution as the promised short cut to the temple of happiness. In one section, and a large one, the faubourg is invincibly revolutionary, and as much given to the formula and the nostrum of curative regeneration as any *malade imaginaire*. Sometimes the workman thinks that if you can simply overturn the existing order and set forth liberty, equality, and fraternity by decree, you will at once change the face of

the world. Disappointed in that, and disappointed, if he could only see it, by the play of his own passions and appetites as much as by aught else, he turns with hope and longing to equally fantastic schemes. He perished in his thousands after the war to make Paris one of thirty-six thousand communes of France, sovereign within its own borders, and uniting with the others for any and every purpose of law, government, and commerce only at its sovereign pleasure. The literature of these movements is based on the Genevese dreamer's concept of man as naturally good, and wanting only a single bath of light to reveal him in his native purity. That is why the faubourg so contentedly dies —just to provide the bath for the human race.

The well-known institution of the Bourse du Travail is an instructive case. In its origin it was a sort of labour exchange, founded at the public expense to bring employers and workmen together in their relations of demand and supply, and to enable the latter to study all the economic problems affecting the welfare of their order.

With this it was a teaching institution, officered by some of the best specialists in Paris; but its working-class members, being of those who think that all roads lead to socialism, soon proposed that as the end of the journey, and the Government took the alarm. The institution was closed; but the influence of the essentially democratic constituency of the municipal council was strong enough to have it re-opened, and there it is to-day, in the Rue du Château d'Eau, more flourishing than ever.

It has a workmanlike look. You are received by men in blouses at the door; you find men in blouses in many of the offices; and you may haply discover a meeting of men on strike in the great hall. They come there when they are out of work either by their own volition, or by the chances of the market. In the latter case they expect the Bourse to let them know of all the work that is going. In the former they discuss their grievances, and choose deputations to lay them before the employers. They have their own organs, monthly and annual, and

other organs which, perhaps, speak more effectually in their name because they have no official sanction. The trend toward extreme doctrine is seen in their *Ouvrier des Deux Mondes*, a monthly review. One of the numbers of this publication celebrates the International and condemns the "atrocious suppression" of the Commune. Another declares that the policy of the revolutionary party is to get all it can while waiting for "the coming revolution." "Not that we ought to ask anything of capital," pursues the writer, "though we should take something at once." And in the official *Annual* I find an account of a little festival at which one of the guests toasted the Commune, and boasted that the organisation of the Bourse du Travail was a benefit "snatched from the egotism of the bourgeoisie." This, in fact, is the dominant note. It means that capital and labour in France are still as wide apart as the poles, and that the vast majority of the poor of Paris still take their "funeral of the eighth class" as much under protest as ever.

LIFE ON THE BOULEVARD

V.

LIFE ON THE BOULEVARD.

THE very paving-stones of great cities might sometimes cry out, "Let us have peace." Some of them may well complain that the foot of man makes too short work of them, considering the time and trouble it took them to grow. Those of the Boulevard are surely entitled to this grievance, as they are ground to premature dust by an army everlastingly on the march. It is a stage army, for it turns on its steps, to repeat the trick of entrance and exit half a dozen times a day. The entrance, I may observe as a stage direction, is by the Rue Royale; the exit very little higher than the Boulevard des Italiens. Beyond that point the long line is simply a place of transit on lawful business, like any other street. The short

stretch between the church and the Rue Richelieu forms the Grand Boulevard ancient of days.

When the New Caledonian of the future seeks his broken arch of the Opéra to sketch the ruins of the Madeleine, he will not fail to observe that the asphalt here is ground to a finer surface than elsewhere. Its air of fatigue will be as eloquent of a too busy past as the rutted ways of Rome. The custom of ages, since these sites ceased to be open country, or open ditch, just beyond the city wall, has sent the people here for news and gossip every day. Once they came for fresh air as well, and having contracted the habit they are loath to part with it, though now they are naturally rationed in that commodity like other inhabitants of walled cities. They seldom, however, fail to get a good blow of the winds of the spirit. The Boulevard is the source or the distributive centre of all the flitting fancies of France. You come here in the daytime for the sensation of the day. You get it of a surety, whatever else you may miss; and while you enjoy it, hot

and hot, truth seems but a spoil-sport. The art of life is, after all, but an art of impressions; and this impression, while it lasts, is sure to be to your taste. The Boulevard asks no more. There will be something new to-morrow; and what you have is sufficient unto the day.

When the Boulevard ends, and the mere boulevards begin, the thing soon rights itself. At Poissonière, if you go so far, you take your sensation for little more than it is worth. By the time you have reached Bonne Nouvelle you are for crying, "What's in a name?" Yet these thoroughfares, after all, are in the grand line, and for many of the humbler sort they have something of its subtle charm. The countless boulevards in other quarters have no such relation to the pulsing life of the city. There are boulevards of communication, boulevards of industry, boulevards of silence, meditation, and prayer. Be sure, therefore, to see that you get the right label when you make your choice. Without this, indeed, you may know the Boulevard by the composition of its

crowds. Their appointed hour is the hour of absinthe, within measurable distance of the time for dinner. They are sleek and stall-fed, and they look forward to their meal with a sure and certain hope. With some, not with many, the whole day has been little more than a preparation for this great act of life. I knew one—still to narrow it down to exceptions that by no means prove the rule—with whom the absinthe was only a final stage of the treatment for appetite. Before that came the douche. When a lusty fellow had pumped on him, as with strokes of a whip of cold water, to urge the sluggish blood into a trot, he was driven to the café for the inward application. Then the green corrosive gnawed him into hunger, and he sought his club to do justice to its cook if not exactly to his Maker.

The club, it must be owned, is the enemy of the Boulevard, in being the enemy of its cafés and of its restaurants. At the beginning of things it was these institutions or nothing if you wanted to exchange a word with your shopmates in the work of life, or

to take bite and sup in their company. This has passed. The club cuisine gives points to the cuisine of the restaurant. The club company is necessarily more select than any café of artists, café of poets, or what not, subject to the intrusion of the outsider. The club, too, has its own town-talk; and since this is but the gossip of the Boulevard, with some improvement in the inflections, it gives members all they want. Yet what the Boulevard loses in this way it gains in many another. Its masses of mere human beings make a society of their own.

Yet the Parisian *déjeuner au restaurant* is still an institution. I know of nothing better in the world. In the general competition among nations in the arts of life France has fixed the form for this repast, if we call it by its proper name of lunch. There are indeed midday meals of every variety, all over the planet, for those who are able to get them. But the Parisian *déjeuner* is the only realised ideal. The breakfasts of the Autocrat were but the ideal; he probably lived on a cracker in the interest of his splendid conversational

dreams. The luncheons of the mighty in London society are our nearest approach to the realisation. What there is of light and grace about them is French by origin or by suggestion. The delicate courses succeed one another with even richer promise to the eye than to the palate, and the *petit verre* seems to close the vista with flowers.

In the Champs-Elysées you may breakfast under the trees, with manufactured surroundings of nature which, for this purpose, are an improvement on the real article. The tame sparrows are probably on the staff of the establishment, but they please. Yet for profit and pleasure, as for scenery of another kind, the rendezvous may still be the Boulevard. The main things are ever the same—lightness and brightness; the former extends from the mode of service to the thing served. There is nothing out of the way in the quality of the viands. The Paris market is ill supplied with fish from the great deep, and the roasts of the Paris kitchen sometimes induce a longing for home that is not purely patriotic. Yet the latter rarely fails

to hold you with the magic of its kickshaws; and if you choose your restaurant with judgment you will find the fare quite good enough for human nature's daily food. The one thing needful is to approach the table in the right spirit, or all the magic goes for naught. That spirit is the spirit of expectation, of longing, of desire for the good things of the body, and of the good-humour which is its natural expression. The doctors say that this lickerishness is an important part of the business of eating, as the mouth that honestly waters for its morsel lightens the labour of the digestive juices.

The Frenchman makes no apology for enjoying his victual, and he knows nothing of the rather artificial humility of our forms of grace before meat. He does not pray that the food may be sanctified to his use and to the most exalted service. It is enough for him to have it agreeable to his palate. So he avoids the inconsistency exposed in the rebuke of Dr. Johnson's wife: "Where is the use, Mr. Johnson, of returning thanks for a dish which, in another minute, you will

declare is unfit for a dog?" He holds—the incorrigible pagan—that the gratifications of sense are as legitimate as all others, and that a filet Châteaubriand is quite as much of an absolute good as the virtue of the Socratic system. Good things to eat, beautiful things to look at, especially women, the quickening appeals of music, oratory, conversation—all these are main parts of his scheme of life. The very scavenger in his *gargote* will smack his lips over a glass of wine limed with plaster of Paris, if he can find no better. The moral it carries, as it goes down, is not exactly thankfulness for the kindly fruits of the earth. He feels only that it is good to be alive; or, to put it inside out, that "when one dies it is for a long time." In rustic wine-shops, here and there, the motto may still be read beneath a faded lithograph wherein three citizens of the time of Louis Philippe touch glasses in an arbour in spring. They are all as dead now as lithography itself, but, while they had their chance, they made the cannikin clink. It was their natural

application of the text, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The compassion of these people for those who devote their entire thought to riches and the toil of ambition might make some of us pause.

This is the French philosophy of the French table—of the breakfast-table especially. I do not criticise, of course; I only try to explain. Its hours are times of truce in the more or less meaningless battle of life, wherein both sides try to find out what it is all about, and to penetrate to the real purport of Renan's "promenade through the Real." All is in harmony: the very waiters are in keeping with this kindly and tolerant scheme. In their unpretentious jackets and aprons and slippers, in their civility and readiness to give counsel on the menu, each of them is a humble friend of man. No such character is to be attributed at sight to the creatures of the same species in foreign restaurants, uniformed like undertakers, and obtruding dress-coats on you in the garish day. Life advances pleasantly, with such aids, in its most serious affairs.

Merchants breakfast over bargains, lawyers over cases, lovers over meetings. Blessed are these breakfasters—while they breakfast—though they may have to remember, before and after, that they are one of the great sad races of mankind. Joyous is their chatter of irresponsible frivolity, tempered by wit; joyous their brag, untrammelled by the modesty which they appraise as a mean way of seeking condonation for success. All is flowing and gracious as the courtesy of kings. The art of its flow is simply an art of thinking aloud. The dullest of us is always thinking of something, if only of what he ought to think about. Let him but think in spoken words, and he has the wherewithal for the companionship of the table. Their strong point is the generous fulness with which they give themselves away to the adversary by saying just what comes into their heads. But it is less generous than it seems, for they know that no one is in ambush at breakfast-time.

The meal over, there is still the balance of the day, and what is to be done with it?

This difficulty is the bane of breakfast for the idler. Let us consider, then, only the few, a very few, in Paris with no work to resume. The break-up may be for a stroll and a peep at the shops. An art-shop will do to begin with, for this will best keep us in touch with that life of old Rome of which you have the perpetual suggestion in all that passes here. Barbédienne's show of bronzes will do as a highest possible of its kind in our time, since no importations from Athens can now put the native work to shame. Its exquisitely rendered types of the humanity of all the ages keep us true to the mood of the hour. We are on a higher tableland of dream than the one we have just left, amid these nymphs and fauns, troubadours and men-at-arms, who seem to assure us upon their sacred honour that there is nothing like living for the splendid shows of things. They may be right or wrong, but the mastery of art with which they are set before us makes it exceedingly hard to contradict them. Every form of the nobler animal life lives, breathes, moves in the still,

reposeful metal. The crouching tigers on the spring might win a roar of recognition from the real article, as, according to Haydon, a horse of the Elgin Marbles won a neigh of fraternity from an English thoroughbred. The lions stalking with the stride of Artemis, the sun-affronting eagles, are manifestly lords of earth and air.

The Frenchman's eye for character in form is unfailing, as though he had in him the potentiality of all the moods and passions of animate life. And it is the same with his feeling for nature at large, as you may see when you leave this shop for a picture-dealer's. It is the other part of his intense, sympathetic delight in the whole visible, tangible world, the world of men and women, of plains and trees and flowers. You are as Prospero's band, dazzled by the sheer beauty of the brave creatures that have just swum into your ken. The demonstration stops short at their braveries, and is in no wise concerned to weight itself with a moral.

The little gems in oil and water-colour are

conceivable altar-pieces of a new religion—a religion for a man of taste, and that category perhaps includes the largest of the dissenting bodies here. The very bonnets in a neighbouring shop have their modest use in the same service. In their present state of unsoiled perfection they look as if they could do no wrong. So of the trailed skirts of the dress-shops; of the exquisite fancies in the windows of the jewellers. And so of the regiment that passes, clarion in front, going now only to its barracks, perhaps in the Place de la République, but beyond that to deeds and to fortunes determinable by the turning of a hair.

What a world of the senses, if not exactly what a world of sense! The stately cortège of the *pompes funèbres*, that was for the earlier part of the day, should perhaps have come at this hour to remind us that other things pass besides the regiment and the applauding crowd. But with these invincible sightseers that would have been only one more of the shows of life. "So may I live as to merit a great public funeral," cried

Claretie one day, in a mood of high resolve. Victor Hugo ordained by will a pauper's shell for his remains. He forgot to forbid them to set his catafalque under the Arc de Triomphe, and to call out the horse and foot of the garrison of Paris to carry him to his grave. So they did it—with apologies to his not implacable shade.

The Boulevard at night is a very different affair. The later the better. Paris, though the most northerly, is still one of the Latin cities, and the Latin cities sit up late. The farther south the more incorrigible. At Madrid the newsboys find it worth their while to cry the papers till one in the morning. The best of the night hours, for Paris, is the hour after the play. The audiences pour into the cafés to celebrate with mild refreshment their recovery of the atmosphere. It is the hour of high change for the affairs of the Boulevard. A haze of illuminating fire falls on a haze of dust rising from the vexed pavement, and—if one may put it so —on a haze of sound. The huge multitude has come out to see itself. That is the

spectacle ; just that and nothing more. The settled swarm under the awnings of the cafés—twenty deep, if you carry your eye to the indoor recesses—seem to pass the moving swarm in review. The pavement, in like manner, surveys the cafés on one side, and on the other the busy road. It is a promenade of curiosity in which, no matter how often you have seen it, you are sure of your reward. Perhaps the seated crowd has the best of it. The others seem to glide past like so many figures of the new-fashioned scheme for painless locomotion. In this, as you remember, a sidewalk on wheels does all the work, and the wayfarer has only to keep still to find himself at his journey's end. The whole scene is a good deal better than the play the spectators have just left. And there is nothing to grumble at in the price of the seats—a bock or a sherry cobbler not more than three hundred per cent. above cost price.

Many old stagers come here night after night as though to stock their imagination

with the stuff of which they hope to make their dreams. It at once quickens and soothes, with a sense of Paris as the hub of the universe and the glory of the world. And glory of a kind it is in good faith. The whole broad space between the two sides of the way is filled with life and movement. In the space between curb and curb you have hundreds of light ramshackle cabs rolling home with their freight of lovers from the Bois, or their heavier burden of "blouses," packed six deep, and vocal with the message of the music-halls. The "victoria" is the gondola of Paris, with a better title, perhaps, than the hansom is the gondola of London. Its long nightly procession to the Cascade, thousands strong, is best seen in the Champs-Elysées, all one side of the road alive with dancing light from the front lamps. As for the occupants, the vehicle is roofless, so they have nothing between them and the stars. The passing regiment is not wanting, even at this late hour, as the smart municipal guards return to barracks from their service of order at the places of public resort. More

rarely, at this hour, you may see a stray dragoon passing from late duty at one of the ministries to the palace of the President. But this is only for emergencies. The daytime is the best for these huge military postmen, who fetch and carry as a regular thing between the public offices, and whose pouches are sometimes laden with nothing more important than a three-cornered note bidding an opera-dancer to lunch.

But the sidewalk is, after all, the distinctive sight of the Boulevard. It is much more than all Paris in its best-known types, and it might pass for all France, or, for that matter, all the world. The small shopkeeper—whose person, as a rule, has shrunk to the fit of his premises—has come out with his wife to take the air. Their little "magazine of novelties" in the haberdashery line has so far yielded in its strife with the temple of Janus as to close at eleven o'clock. Their stroll tends to relieve the otherwise intolerable tedium of existence with a sense of the larger movement of life. The flamboyant provincials from Normandy or from the country of

Tartarin have just been disgorged by an excursion train. These, and the soldiers on leave from distant garrisons, have come up for a bath of light in this all-abounding flame. The unhealthy-looking lads, bourgeoning with stray hairs and pimples, have evidently given maternal vigilance the slip. The students from the Quarter have left a like scene on the Boulevard "Mich" for the richer variety of this one. The bloused workmen with their wives, and here and there, even at this late hour, with their children as well, give the note of gravity and purpose, and correct the cruder frivolities of the scene. Yet, in the main, it is quite a "respectable" crowd, and the revellers are still its minority.

The French have so much the sense of character and the sense of spectacle that they are capable, at need, of an entire disinterestedness on the moral side in regard to the shows of things. Our pair from the magazine of novelties take the moral judgment for granted, and come here just for the stimulus of the thought that Paris is a

fine feast for the eye. The wife, no doubt, has her thoughts as she sees some of the women in the crowd. But these thoughts permit her to feel that she has her reward in self-respect for the tedium of trying to save for old age on the fractional profits of the sale of ha'p'orths of thread. The little man himself may make the like improving reflections as he catches sight of the grey-headed old bird of evil who is at his perch in the corner when he ought to be in bed. There was a sort of parting of the ways, perhaps, when our mercer repented of his leadership of the dance at vanished Valentino, and gave security for future good behaviour by taking the wife and the shop.

The baser crowd is not edifying. There are touts who furtively offer you what purports to be forbidden fruit of literature. There are the café scavengers, who live by picking up the ends of cigars and cigarettes, to be worked up again into a sort of resurrection pie for the refreshment of poor smokers. Terrible creatures some of these—lean, un-

washed, slouching, saturnine, with murder as an occasional alternative to their industries of poverty or shame. The opportunity comes when they meet a drunken carter reeling home by one of the bridges. Then the silent knife does its work, and the rifled body is tossed into the water to vanish for ever, save for the brief interval of its reappearance at the morgue. There is a more sickening villainy in these lower types of Paris than in the London rough of the same calling. He kills with violence, but without finesse, and he is wicked with his appetites rather than with his reason. He wants his toke and his beer, and he robs or, at need, slays to get it. His French colleague affects the niceties of the band and the password, and lays out his booty in diversions of infamy in which mere tipple has but a small share. Not unfrequently he is quite a philosopher in his way. When Ravachol was not murdering solitary misers for their hoards, or breaking open graves for trinkets, he used to spout at public meetings on the wrongs of the proletariat; and, at the end, he

raised the "Carmagnole" as his death-song, though, it must be owned, in a cracked voice, as he danced his way to the guillotine.

The very paralytic who prowls the Boulevard with his hand twisted by art or nature into a cup for alms has his social theory. "It is in the nature of the race. They are constructive artists even in their vices, and they like to feel that what they are doing is a thing that admits of being done with an air. The Boulevard is the happy hunting-ground of these castaways, but beyond it each one has a boulevard of his own. Here, on off days, he too sits and sips with his mates, reads his paper—the paper written for him—and chucks his forlorn Thais under the chin. In times of trouble they all descend upon the Boulevard, and play sad havoc with the furniture of existing constitutions in the brief interval between the scamper of the policemen and the arrival of the guard. During the troubles at "Fort Chabrol" they sacked a church, and defiled its altars under the stimulus of a liberal allowance in promotion-

money by the factions interested in the proceeding. They work by the job, and the secret agents of the Orleanist Pretender know where they are to be found when the time has come to demonstrate the need of a monarchical saviour of society.

The newspaper-hawker is sometimes of their corporation, and he is always an essential figure of the Boulevard. This crowd that has come out for the new thing must be fed with it, especially at night when its mind is most free for impressions. The flying couriers, shouting their wares in cavernous head voice, are but one sign of the insistence of the demand. The kiosk is, above all things, a Parisian institution, gorged as it is to overflowing with flying sheets and flying fancies from every part of the planet, from every corner of the human mind, even the foulest. Its budgets of papers hang from the pointed roof, obscure the windows, overflow from the narrow ledge of the half-door into supplementary counters on trestles outside. They are of all sorts—the academic *Débats*, the solid and serious

Temps, the wild *Libre Parole*, with its sensational shriek of the hour against the Protestants or against the Jews. It is a picture-gallery as well as a library, its whole surface exhibiting a very rash of illustration, occasionally symptomatic of deep-seated disease. Here, in coloured lithograph, they murder a woman, and the red stream trickles from the knife driven to the hilt in her breast. The mincing misses of the fashion sheets are close by. The society journals spread themselves in large cartoons of ball and bathing-place. The amusing journal—save the mark!—displays wares of a kind to suggest that at last the very Yahoos have learned to read. The "almanacs" of the different social orders touch every social interest from religion to debauchery. Add to this American and English papers, with Russian, German, Spanish, Italian, and Levantine, the latest pamphlets for and against everything in Church and State, the time-tables of the railways, the quotations of the Bourse, and you have a hurly-burly of imaginative suggestion,

around which the old woman who sits wedged among these explosive forces, with her feet on a brazier, is serviceable as a fixed point.

The midnight Boulevard is a sort of first "finish" for most of the pleasures of town. You come here for the wind-up, if you are keeping within the limits of discretion. So, among the many roads leading this way, is the Avenue of the Champs-Elysées. These lamp-lit gardens begin to pale their fires as the night wears on. Very pretty they are when the lights are in the fulness of their mellowed blaze, with the screen of foliage to soften them still more into a suggestion of tender mystery. I think those who see them through the screen, that is to say, from the outside, have the best of it. Within, these cafés have the hardness of a cage of performing birds that sing by command. Still the stranger must not pass them by. Their songs are brief chronicles of the time, studies of manners, signs of the point of view. Their singers are like such singers everywhere, never less to be mistaken for

their betters than when they are most carefully dressed for the part; but the business of these artists is the humour of the moment, and their tuneful truisms are fresh from the surface of the popular mind. It is not that what they sing to-day Paris does to-morrow. But you may put it the other way: they would not sing it if Paris had not done something of the sort yesterday. So one of them, figuring as an ex-cabman, tells us in somewhat interminable verse that he has now become the driver of a motor-car. And another—this time a real lidy, as far as dress can do it—warbles the fascinations of the little work-girl of the capital—her wicked smile, her mocking air. Chorus, "Gentille Parisienne—flower of Paris," etc. (Note—from the stage directions of the published copy—"When the song is sung in the provinces make it 'Gentille magicienne,' and substitute for 'Paris' the name of the town.") It describes a type and an ideal the thing that every apprentice in the bonnet trade would like to be, a thing of grace and beauty, set

off by the elusive smartness of the faubourgs of toil.

The new-comer, who appears in the character of the poor workman, is a social satirist. Such, he assures you, is his positive adoration of work that he could sit still a whole day seeing other people do it. This means that the café chantant does not exactly strike the democratic note — at any rate, when the café is in the Champs-Elysées. When it is farther east this song would never do, and there would have to be another change in the stage directions. Next, perhaps, we have the "Polka of the English's," which, of course, is but another shy at the universal Aunt Sally of the Continent. Why the American escapes in Paris I know not, but escape he does. I have seen him from time to time in drama, but never on the music-hall stage. Yet the Americans of this capital, as I should judge at a guess, outnumber the English. Chorus—

"Tra la la la la, la la la la la!
Voilà les English's! Aoh, yes! Very well!
Tra la la la la, la la la la la!"
Plats comm' des sandwichs. Aoh, yes! Very well!"

The last line is an unkind allusion to the figures of our ladies. The singer goes on to say that, when the English's have made their millions in Paris, they go back to "eat" them at their ease in London. No wonder, since they receive this hard measure from the Paris bards.

Now it is the turn of Polin, the latest idol of the music-halls. He figures as the common soldier, the *pioupiou*, with his simple virtues of good-humour and fidelity to the flag, and his simple tastes for good eating and drinking and fat nursemaids—gallantry, gaiety, and courage, the irresistible combination for the French mind. It will be conducive to your comfort if you are not able to understand quite all that he sings. Happily, you will never be able to do it if you have confined your studies of French to the classic models. He and Yvette Guilbert blaze together in the firmament. Her muse is more subtle, and its eccentricities are better composed. But composed they are. The story goes that some art students, foreseeing the possibilities of a new music-

hall type, resolved to create a feminine decadent. They searched long for their personality, and at length found it in this slender and archaic-looking person. Then they trained her for tones, gestures, tricks of manner; in a word, for style. She was an apt pupil, and when they had done with her she seemed to have stepped out of some picture of Botticelli as the languidly graceful embodiment of all the wickedness and cynicism of an empty day. She is really an artist, and that is perhaps why she has lasted so long. But let her make hay while the sun shines. Judic, that once beautiful and incomparable creature, with a most exquisite way of saying things that ought not to be said, is fallen from her high estate, and now twinkles in a mere milky way of unmappable stars. And Paulus is not very much in evidence, Paulus who nearly sang France into a revolution, as the Pindar of General Boulanger. Yet the historian of the future will have to take account of "En Revenant de la Revue." He must, however, not fail to remark that the song has been

altered to suit the times, and that, in place of

"Moi j' faisais qu' admirer
Notr' brav' Général Boulanger,

we now sing,

"Moi très fort je criais,
'Vive le Président Loubet!'"

As the Boulevard is the Finish for the Champs-Elysées, so Montmartre is the Finish for the Boulevard. The whole hill-side keeps it up very late; in fact, one of the cafés is open all night. Montmartre by night is a thing that many go to see just to make sure that it is not worth seeing. After all, how else are you to know? The goal of this pilgrimage is the group of cafés, "artistic," "literary," and others, which are now among the shows of Paris. They never were anything but shows, as their proprietors were never anything but showmen. Some of the Bohemians for the decorative part of the scheme are hired precisely like the waiters, and paid on a truck system of free drinks. The net result is the patronage of provincials and of foreigners, especially of candid souls from over sea, who think they

are looking on something peculiarly Parisian. As a matter of fact the showman has these fresh importations in view from first to last. The young Englishman, the young American, writes about the cafés to his brother, and implores him not to let the letter fall into the hands of the girls. The cafés of poets are always changing and always the same. At one time the café of the "Black Cat" was all the vogue. It was not unhappily named in regard to its effect on the finer senses. Then, when this grew tiresome, commercial enterprise proved equal to the invention of the café of the "Dead Rat." Now the names have changed again, but not the things. The "Rat" was the "Cat," as "Rat" and "Cat" together are in palingenesia in our latest birth of time, the "Red Ass," whose name might be enough to excite misgiving in the minds of its customers. The poets and artists of the Quarter come here for refreshment, spiritual and other—that is the humour of it. They are supposed to come to recite their pieces to one another, or to show their sketches, as they might offer

their confidences of genius to the family circle, if they had ever heard of such a thing. Their nearest approach to the conception of family is their touching filial relation to the landlord of the house—another supposition expressly started for the crowd. He is their father rather than their *limonadier;* he lets them run up scores during the sharp frosts of the Muse; nay, he sometimes helps to bring them out, such is the legend. Then, when they win fame and riches—they all win it in due course—they make him free of their palaces in the Avenue de Villiers, and of their châlets at Poissy or Ecouen.

Alas and alas! it is all moonshine in purest ray serene. Montmartre poets are mostly an even poorer lot in spirit than they are in purse, and they will never be anything else. The writers and artists of repute know nothing of these cafés, or, at most, see them once and never see them again. Victor Hugo was temperate and a hard worker in his youth—a youth of iron, not a youth of gold. So was Leconte de Lisle. So was Coppée. So was Sully-Prudhomme. De

Musset sometimes took more than was good for him, but not in places like these. The new model was started by Verlaine, but one swallow does not make a summer, and it is needless to say you do not exactly imitate his talent by imitating his infirmities.

Montmartre is not so much as the Grub Street of Paris, for Grub Street was actually productive, and it was at least sincere. Most of these poets and painters are simply the failures of the schools masquerading as the coming men. They are put out of doors as soon as they cease to draw. Their very wickedness is scenic, and it bears a strong family likeness to the potations from the skull in the revels of Newstead Abbey. The contemplative ratepayer looks in, drinks his glass of beer, and goes his way, thanking Heaven he was not born clever. The tourist lays out a few francs in a copy of a song or a copy of a volume, and writes well-meant but misguiding letters to his native papers to say that he has been at supper with the gods.

If the Red Ass is your mark you must

steer for the Rue des Martyrs. Its walls are covered with pictures and sketches, with here and there a bust of some celebrity of the Quarter. There is a piano, as a matter of course, and near it hangs a monstrous crown surmounted by a star, which, from time to time, is solemnly placed on the brow of the local Master of Song. The coronation, to be fair, is sometimes a joke, and the utmost refinement of local humour is to offer it to the biggest fool of the company, and to enjoy his fatuous smile of perfect self-satisfaction. The room is crowded, the drinks are in brisk demand; and, through the haze of smoke, one may get a glimpse of a sibyl of the moment in her incantation scene of a sentimental ditty. It may be a pretty one, explaining why the lover has sent his adored a present of flowers, less perhaps for her satisfaction than to compel her to think of the giver. But the way of the sibyl is hard as to her air and voice, and she suggests a long and a profitless experience of the humbler music-halls. The languor with which her efforts to please are received is discouraging.

The company is too busy with itself to pay much attention to her at the close, but it is brought to a sense of its duties by a master of ceremonies. This personage, who is in evening dress, may possibly be a bard, but he is certainly on the staff of the establishment. He calls for three rounds of applause, which are given in a French variety of the Kentish fire, and the sibyl abates something of the vigour of her frown. His business is to force the fun, and he has evidently begun with himself by getting considerably alcoholised. His hat is on the back of his head, as though to temper the severity of his scheme of costume with a suggestion of Bohemian freedom. The sibyl is succeeded by a young man who might have sat to Rodin for his Balzac, in so far as that nightmare mask bears any definite relation to humanity. The young man's song is of "Poor mad Jean," who passes for a sort of village idiot, but who, nevertheless, apostrophises all the pillars of society with the most withering effect. No deputy, no banker, no mayor in his scarf can cross Jean's path without a

word of invective. "You take bribes," "You get up bogus companies," "Your popular cry of the hour is but a juggler's password." But these crafty villains are equal to the occasion, and they juggle away his censures with their pitying smile. "It is only 'Poor mad Jean.'" One of the verses might almost provoke Mr. Sheldon to enter an action for infringement of copyright. It is to the effect that if the Founder of Christianity came to-day to say what He said eighteen centuries ago, they would keep Him at a safe distance as they keep "the poor lad who has lost his wits." The song is well written, and still better conceived. But the odd thing is to find it but an item of an entertainment by which the man of business who owns the establishment is making his fortune as fast as he can. It seems to lack conviction on the part of the management. However, it breathes the sentiment which is proper to the quarter where the Commune made its last stand—and, besides, there is a policeman at the door.

The Conservatoire, hard by the Place Pigalle, is just such another café—sketches, paintings, portraits of Degenerate poets—chiefly of Montmartre, a motley company. The portrait of Verlaine, of course, is not wanting. He is the patron saint of these houses, and every one of them makes believe to have a shrine of his "favourite corner." The walls and ceiling are wrought into the likeness of a Gothic vault. The songs are the songs of the Red Ass; the singers are sometimes the singers of that establishment on their rounds; the applause is manufactured, as before, by another leader of the claque. The impression which these mechanics labour to convey is that everybody concerned is having a deuce of a time. Some of the poets rush from café to café in feverish pursuit of applause, and may be found now in the Latin Quarter, now at Montmartre, with their baggage of a new ode. One I have visited in his workshop on a sixth floor, and, sitting on his narrow bed for want of a second chair, have had the honour of listening to a theory of

decadent literature which I should have thought beyond the dreams of the asylum at Charenton. Yet he was a mild-mannered young fellow, and, as I should judge, a man of convictions, the chief one being that you must be, above all things, desperately wicked if you want to succeed in the arts.

The attempt to go one more on these institutions, still for the benefit of the same set of customers, has led to the cafés devoted to horrors. Here the subjects are crime and the terrors of death. It is infinitely puerile, and to consider it with indignation would be to consider it too seriously. The proprietors are showmen once more. One of the weaknesses of the French is a taste for make-believe wickedness, and they play at being naughty as others play at being good. Their Tartufe, for all he is a national creation, is no national type. To make that of him we should have to turn him the other way about, and portray not a hypocrite of virtue, but a hypocrite of vice. Thus, in the Place Pigalle, we have a café of the hulks, an establishment devoted entirely to

the glorification of crime. Its proprietor would no doubt be highly indignant with anybody who picked his pocket or broke into his house, and would claim the same immunity from the imputation of moral perversity as the proprietor of the chamber of horrors in a waxwork show. So he has fitted up his place as a museum of crime, with scraps of the furniture and fittings from the old prison of Mazas, lately demolished. Here you have the door of the cell in which some famous criminal, Pranzini, or other passed his last night on earth, with perhaps the suit of clothes in which he was executed, or it may be a mortuary tablet of some other noted hand—"guillotined on" such a day. The den is dimly lit, and to keep it in the note of doom you enter to a kind of infernal discord, due to the joint efforts of a cracked piano and a big drum. The master of ceremonies, attired as a Russian moujik, but in black velvet at that, offers you a sort of disdainful welcome, and affects to regard you as a convict or a murderer at large. The songs and recita-

tions are in honour of the fraternity of crime, to which you are supposed to belong. It is dreadfully tedious, and five minutes of it is more than enough for the most robust endurance. If you ask for explanations you are informed that it is a sort of object-lesson in the theories of the Realist school. The man in velvet occasionally contributes to the harmony in the character of a desperate ruffian glorying in a deed of blood, but, as one may judge, at the heart of him, he is but a noodle and nincompoop. In private conversation he alludes to the little villa in the suburbs, which is the reward of his steady attention to business. A yawning policeman in the background takes the sting out of the whole entertainment, by showing that it is under the protection of order and of law.

If you care for any more of it—and really you may just as well see it out—there is a neighbouring Café du Néant, otherwise a Café of Nothingness or Café of Death. Here the tables at which you are served are shaped as coffins, and the whole place is lit

with corpse light. A waiter rigged up as an undertaker's man accosts you with a "Good-evening, Moribund," and serves you with refreshment which by its quality seems designed to hasten your passage to the other world. There are emblems of death all round the walls, with mottoes such as "To be or not to be," or "Life is a folly which Death corrects." From the café you pass into a vaulted chamber at the back of the premises, with a stage which is simply furnished with a coffin standing upright. A man takes his place in the coffin, kisses his hand to the audience, and then, by some optical illusion, he gradually fades away into the likeness of a skeleton outlined in light. In a moment he comes back to life again, steps out, and with a bow disappears. This is the Café of Death.

The Café of the Infernal Regions close by is an equally finished contrivance in absurdity. Here, as you enter, you find yourself in a scene of penal fire, very red, and your orders for drinks are taken by devils. Then, as before, you troop into the

room at the back, in which twining serpents form the scheme of decoration. When the curtain goes up you are introduced by the showman to Satan and to Madame his wife. The enemy of mankind is simply an acrobat dressed in red and illuminated with limelight of the same colour, as he turns and twists before the audience. Madame is a lady in the scanty costume of the ballet, and she stands in flames of many colours, and finally seems to be consumed by them and to disappear. Other ladies of her court burn down to the vanishing point in the same way. The final stage of this pilgrimage of tomfoolery is the Cabaret of Heaven, a few doors further off. Here, it is needless to say, the waiters wear wings, and the place is made up like a Gothic cathedral, while a sort of deacon ushers customers to their places. You are then invited to mount to the abode of bliss, and you pass into an upper room where other members of the gang go through a blasphemous masquerade. It is not to be taken as a sign of the utter wickedness and degradation of Paris. These

cafés are but a corner of the city at the most, and a corner in which you will, as a rule, find more foreigners and provincials than you will find Parisians. One or two cafés keep open the whole night long by special permission of the police, though why that permission should be given it is not easy to understand.

The Empire, with all its faults, kept a tighter hand on the dissipations of the capital, and, whatever it did on its own account, it knew how to govern in the interests of public order. If these absurdities now enjoy more toleration it is because they are merely the accidents and the excesses of the freedom that France has won. We must take the good with the bad. The administration is less powerful: people are better able to do as they like for good, and that implies, in these rare and exceptional instances, the power of doing as they like for evil. The all-night cafés, and let us say most of the other cafés we have been looking at, should be closed. There is a huge one on the Rue Royale which casts ruddy light

across the way until the dawn comes to put it to shame. By that ray we may see the neighbouring flower market of the Madeleine, now being stocked for the day, in time for the morning visit of fashion. This brings us to the Boulevard once more; and, as the Boulevard is at last at peace, it had better lead us home to bed.

FASHIONABLE PARIS

VI.

FASHIONABLE PARIS

IN October and November fashionable persons pour into Paris for the season. From this time forward, for about six months, town will be their headquarters. Sometimes they make short winter trips to the southern watering-places, but they are still more or less in touch with the capital. The immigrant swarm includes all sorts of outlandish figures, pleasure-seekers of the world at large. These do not visit the shrines with quite the same devotion as of old. Still, to anyone on this continent whose pursuit is "a good time," Paris is always, more or less, a matter of course. It can never be left wholly out of the reckoning.

Our older European societies make leisure a very serious vocation. They are deliber-

ately trained for it, and they chase the butterfly with more conviction than the younger communities of the world. For instance, in a general sense, the dandy in America, while on his way to more generous recognition, is still only the transient and embarrassed phantom of Disraelian phrase. The urgent crowd yet mocks at him and his like, and he has no regular course of frivolity that keeps him hard at it, in a stately progress from trifle to trifle, for the revolving year. In France the science of not earning your own living is carried to high perfection. So it is in England, though in a more serious way, thanks to the larger resource of public life. In both you see the same thing in different forms—the necessity of making pleasure an organised energy.

Years ago, when there was a temporary lull in the performances at the Salle Ventadour, the society papers were much exercised as to what should be done to fill the blank. There was a Tuesday night left unoccupied. The necessary man, however, came at the right moment in the shape of a viscount,

who imagined a Tuesday at the Théâtre Français. It was "created," and with the greatest care. Society subscribed. The *Figaro* published a plan of the house, showing exactly where the Rothschilds, the Pourtalès, the Sagans, and other shining lights might be discerned with the naked eye. The contriver was considered to have deserved well of his country.

Theoretically, there is now no season in Paris, just as, theoretically, there are no fashions. This means that one section of society is still sulking with the Republic. The idea is that it will be inconsolable until the King comes back, and that it disdains all those mundane vanities in which it has no better leader than a President and his wife. I remember once seeking out M. Worth, now long since gone to his account, to inquire of him, in a spirit of philosophic investigation, how the fashions were started. I had imagined that it would be interesting to discover the very fount of inspiration in these matters, to find out exactly how a new skirt or a new bodice was revealed to the

race. He satisfied my curiosity in the most obliging manner, though at the outset he assured me that, under the Republic, the fashions were not started at all. They simply occurred, in a more or less fugitive fashion, because there was no one to set the needful example.

In the old days, he said, it was simple enough. He hit upon an idea, and submitted it to two or three ladies of taste in the court of the Empress. They liked it, or did not like it, and taking counsel with him, they finally shaped it into something which they might feel justified in laying before the throne. It was then further modified on its way to perfection. At length came the great day, say the opening of the spring races, when one or two of them imposed it on the mass of womankind as a sort of edict from above. With that it started on its travels round the world.

But, virtually, of course, life has to be lived, just as women have to be dressed, and so, no matter what the régime, things get themselves done after a fashion. The

science of sulking with the Republic has to own certain limitations. Rich and idle people must amuse themselves, and if they cannot get the social leadership they want, they have to invent some working substitute. As a class, the French aristocracy have no participation in public affairs. They go into political life in the unit, not in the mass, and on the same principle of equality as the notary of a country town who works his way into the Chamber or into office. So many of them fall back on pleasures of the more frivolous kind, but for these all who seek to enjoy them, high and low alike, train with exquisite care. It is mainly a training for moderation. They know that excess is a mistake. The object is the luxury of agreeable sensation, and this precludes riot.

There is nothing more wonderful in nature, or rather in art, than a French man or woman who has succeeded in perfectly realising this racial ideal. The man especially eats and drinks well, but only by virtue of the most rigorous self-control. His dishes are arranged in a certain succession of

flavours that help one another. His drinks are sipped in a scale of stimulation rising from grave to gay. I have known little partnerships for this purpose, in which men dining out at a strange place have agreed that one shall serve as taster for the two, on the principle that if indigestion is to be the penalty there shall still be a survivor. As the different dishes are served the taster smiles or shakes his head, and the other instantly partakes or refrains. It marks their sense of reverence for the temple of the body, and so brings them as near to religion as some are likely to get.

This training for trifles begins at birth with the infant of fashion. It is very much the business of his nurse to see that light and air do not visit him too roughly. His swaddling-clothes are a marvel of completeness as non-conductors of the winds of heaven. As soon as he is old enough to understand things you see him toddling out with his tutor, a grave ecclesiastic, who watches over him at work and play, and puts the right notions into his mind. The

ties thus formed are never wholly severed. The priest attends to all the goings out and the comings in. When ball is the game he is there to see that his charge does not hurt himself nor hurt the ball. He makes the lad gravely polite, and grounds him in the secondary religion of the salute, on the principle of no game of shuttlecock without a bow to your partner. He also, of course, grounds him in the humanities. At this early age the child is not sent to school. He is coached at home by the priest, and taken once or twice a week to what is called a *cour*, an establishment where private teaching is tested by public examinations. The *cour* directs the studies, and determines proficiency in them by question and answer. Tutor and pupil prepare as best they can in the interval.

The essence of the system is the exclusion of everything from the boy's mind that ought not to be there. So he is under the strictest supervision from first to last. The priest takes him to the *cour* and fetches him away again. When he goes to the *lycée*, or

public school, it is much the same. The valet takes the place of the priest, and fetches and carries, with due provision of muffler and umbrella for rainy days. So it goes on until the time of the great change, when, perhaps, the youngster is sent to Saumur, the great cavalry school. Then, for the first time, he has to stand alone, and father, mother, nurse, valet, and priest have to say "good-bye." It is always an anxious moment—especially so for the neophyte.

The bound from tutelage to the very licence of liberty, moral and intellectual, is a marked characteristic of the French system. Marriage makes the trembling ninny of a girl a finished woman of the world. A first shave converts the gawky schoolboy into the ape of a boulevardier, vices and all. The transformation is as sudden as anything in Eastern magic. He was a boy after his time under the tutelage system. He becomes a man before his time at Saumur, and he generally goes through a stage of puppyism which is a trial for his friends. This is the period of his first duel,

a thing done on the sly, and revealed to his horrified mother only after the scratch has healed. By-and-by there may be other escapades of a more serious nature. But the mother is still there to find out all about them almost before they happen, and the watchful father is at hand to see that they entail a minimum of scandal.

At this stage his people begin to think of marrying him, and here again all is provided for by the ever-watchful system. It is the mother's business to learn the whereabouts of *ingénues* doubly dowered with virtue and with millions. The marriage is arranged—the term has a more than usually deep significance in France—and the pair have a chance of living happily ever after, if they know how to make the best of it. It is no bad chance. Though the French marriage is not, in the first instance, based on love, it is supposed never to take place until liking, at least, is assured. The rest is expected to come as a matter of growth. The theory is that any two persons of about equal age, circumstances, and breeding, if

only they start fair in friendship, will learn to love each other by the mere accident of companionship and the identity of interests. The odd thing is that they very often do.

The wife has been still more carefully brought up, in her way. Nothing can exceed the more than Hindu sanctity of know-nothingism in which the mind of the young French girl is shrouded from birth. At the convent she has had the wall between her and a wicked world. Her whole art of polite conversation with a man is little more than "Oui, monsieur," "Non, monsieur." After a dance she must be safely and swiftly deposited—a sort of returned empty—by her mother's side, and during that brief flutter of freedom it is not good form to take advantage of the absence of the parent bird. A few observations on the weather and the picture-galleries are considered to mark the limit of taste. "Gyp" has assured us in many a cynic page that the *ingénue* is not half such a simpleton as she looks. But it must not be forgotten that "Gyp" has largely invented a type for her

own business uses. The real article, while it is not exactly a lamb in innocence, is still happily unaware of most of the evil going on in the world. Here, as military life was the great change for the boy, marriage is the greater change for the girl. She passes at once into a sphere in which she is considered fair game for any allusion to anything within the bounds of good breeding. She rises to her opportunity, or to the stern duties of her station, whichever way you may choose to put it, and in a surprisingly short time comes out as the finished woman of the world. This is the French way. I neither blame it nor defend it; I do not even try to account for it. I simply say what it is.

In this new state of development you will probably find the young wife at the head of a salon. Her vocation in this respect will be determined by her rank, her wealth, or her talents; but with or without them, if she holds any position, she will aspire to this kind of social leadership. It is difficult to define the French salon in a phrase. It is

by no means a mere drawing-room filled with company. It is something distinctly organised with a purpose of leadership. The hostess tries to make her house a centre of influence in politics, literature, art, or social advancement. The thing is not unknown in other capitals. People come and go; they bring the news, they hear the news, and they work out their little schemes. The main art of the salon is, of course, conversation. As men at the bar talk to live, people in the salon live to talk. With this they have to cultivate the social graces. They learn to listen well, to keep their tempers, to amuse—in a word, to make life pass smoothly for themselves and for others. The salon is really a great school of manners, and it is part of that art of painless pleasure which, as we have seen, is widely cultivated in France. If the wife belongs to the aristocracy her salon will be of the *grand monde*. If she only wants to belong to it, her salon will probably be political. If she shines by taste or talent, it will be literary or musical. There are

salons for everything, even for settling elections to the Academy. If you attend them you are expected to be amusing as well as to be amused.

Salons have their fortunes, like little books. They go up and down, according to the circumstances of the time, and sometimes the literary salon is most in vogue, and sometimes the political. The old-fashioned Legitimist salon has had all sorts of fortunes. It was in great force when Louis XVIII. was brought back by the allies after Waterloo. Then the scheme was to undo the work of the Revolution, and the women of the Restoration, with their priests at their back, set about it with a will. They organised the "White Terror," a sort of counterpoise to the "Red," which had just passed away, and they gave the whole Liberal school of thought an exceedingly lively time.

There was some attempt to revive the Legitimist salon when the luckless MacMahon had his brief day. The Duchesse de Chevreuse held gloomy state, and people

prophesied the coming catastrophe of the Republic over afternoon tea. But the duchess was only less belated than her old master, the Comte de Chambord, and it was felt that if Legitimism was to get the whip-hand of France it must still condescend a little to notice the time of day. So the most typical salon of this period was the one managed by the Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia. It was the requisite blend of old and new. She was active, much in evidence, a great patron of charities —in short, a person with a finger in every pie, and all to the end of the restoration of throne and altar. But she failed for want of a good partner. The duke was an amiable nullity in affairs. He could drive a four-in-hand; he was an authority on the laws of sport, a noisy politician, but no more. They tried to make a diplomatist of him by the simple process of sending him as ambassador to the court of St. James, but he was soon recalled.

The salons of finance lent a hand in this pious work. Mme. Bischoffsheim spent

money like water to keep the cause in heart. So did the Duchesse d'Uzès—a Clicquot in her origin. The development of her salon, the way in which it rose from small ambitions to greater ones was peculiar. It began merely as the best match-making salon in the Faubourg St. Germain; it ended as the best salon of political intrigue. Long after the 16th of May had been swept into limbo the influence of the duchess survived in her championship of the Boulangist movement. She rallied to the Comte de Paris, as she had been ready to rally to his cousin, and she is said to have put up no small part of the money for that gigantic trust of sedition which was to be managed by the man on the black horse.

In this way we see how easily the social salon passes into the political. In fact, the dividing-lines, as I have given them, are only for purposes of classification. There are few drawing-rooms where they stick solely to one thing. The more or less purely political salons exhibit an agreeable

diversity. They are of all shades, and of course they are especially Republican. At present, however, the salons of this variety are in a state which the grammarians define as "being about to be." They have been, and they are to be again. But they are still waiting for such leadership as they had under Mme. Adam, Mme. Floquet, and Mme. Lockroy. Mme. Lockroy, indeed, survives as a ruler. She is the wife of the pushing politician, late Minister of Marine, who has long held a high position in politics, and she was the daughter-in-law of Victor Hugo. She is charming and sociable, and is altogether a person that no rising Republican politician, with convictions and an enlightened sense of self-interest, can afford to neglect.

Still, she is not what Mme. Adam was. That lady still holds receptions, but she too is only an object of comparison beside her former self. Her great day was at the time of that very 16th of May when she held aloft the banner of the Republic, as the duchesses held the banner of the re-

action. Her house was a kind of citadel, amply provisioned with tea and cake, where the struggling Radicals, with Gambetta at their head, held the councils that saved their cause. The hostess had an almost ideal equipment of gifts for this part—beauty, widowhood (which meant freedom), and the inheritance of a wealthy Republican senator. Then she touched life at other points, as a busy, if not a great, writer in romance and in politics, and a champion of woman's rights. All this was naturally set off with a boundless self-confidence. Her failings were those that leaned to the side of that virtue. She grew too pushing, too energetic, and became one of that imperious band who rule our spirits from their urns—in this case, the urn for tea. She was for giving laws to the lawmakers of the Republic, and settling the rise and fall of ministries from her boudoir. When that ambition was fairly developed the Republican chiefs had to part company with her. But, before the change, she exercised a wide influence. She virtually gave away places.

Her salon used to be thronged with all sorts of people who had their way to make in the world. Men who wanted a prefecture paid assiduous court. Dramatists who had hopes of production at the Français, a State matter in its further reaches, elbowed them on the stairs. It was a busy and a brilliant scene. It lost its essential glories when Gambetta and his associates no longer appeared, to keep their hostess in countenance in her promises of political favour. With them, naturally, went the place-hunters. Still, she struggled on, and kept up the fight by founding the *Nouvelle Revue*, and making herself exceedingly disagreeable at times as the candid friend of the party in power.

She is visited and honoured yet, if only as a memory, but, from ill health and the other causes, she is no longer what she was. She reached her height of influence when the obsequious municipality of Paris named a street after her pseudonym of "Juliette Lamber." Her decline was marked by a proposal in the same assembly to take her

street away from her and give it to some new Egeria. For all that she holds it to this day. Poor General Uhrich at Strasburg went up and down in thoroughfares in this manner during the war. In the earlier stages of the siege he was rapidly promoted from streets to boulevards and squares; but as the Germans tightened their grip on the city, and the reports grew less favourable, he lost all.

Another and an interesting variety of the political salon is the salon of the lady spy. This is exceedingly well appointed, and is altogether a curiosity of its kind. You are cordially welcomed if you have any information to impart. You give it as to an intelligent woman of position who happens to be keenly interested in public affairs, and whose little dinners are a refreshment of all the senses. If you are a foreign attaché you are expected to turn a sidelight on the international intrigue of the moment; if a rising politician, you show the inwardness of a forthcoming debate; if a journalist, you give and you receive from all the four

winds of the spirit as they blow. It goes on quite merrily for a time, until the hostess suddenly disappears under the imputation that she was in the pay of a foreign power, or perhaps of the Prefecture of Police.

The literary salon was in its perfection when M. Caro was the favourite lecturer at the Sorbonne. There is generally a fashionable professor in Paris, as there is a fashionable preacher. The smartest women attend his lectures, and take copious notes on points of metaphysics or theology. The strength of Caro's position was that they actually read the notes when they got home. He came to strengthen that reaction in favour of the Catholic faith which was one effect of the war. People were so humbled by the national disasters that their thoughts were easily turned to religion. So there began a movement against scepticism, and Caro led it at the Sorbonne. He lectured, with exceeding grace and charm, to prove that there was no necessary divorce between philosophy and faith. The fine ladies were edified and delighted. They formed rival

salons in honour of him, both known as the "Carolines," after his name—one set as the "Carolines" of the north of Paris, and the other as the "Carolines" of the south. This went on until Pailleron put him and his worshippers on the stage in a famous comedy, *Le monde où l'on s'ennuie.* It was meant to crush Caro, but it did nothing of the sort. Ridicule gave him the benefit of an advertisement. He met the attack by taking a box in the theatre and watching the whole performance, sometimes applauding his own counterfeit on the stage. He died as he had lived, successful, and deservedly so, for he was a man of erudition, and of great refinement of manner and of literary style. The interest of his personality in this connection is that it shows how society, when it is in the mood, knows how to get entertainment out of everything. Here was a lecturer at the Sorbonne who gave Paris not only two literary salons, but even a new play.

The French club takes its character from the French salon. It has to be amusing or

die. The French have a highly developed club life, only it is necessarily a club life of their own. They take less joy than the English, from whom they are supposed to derive the institution, in those negative clubs in which you simply dine and read your paper. They expect the club to do a good deal for them. It is to have an active function, and is to be much more than a mere place of meeting. So the really typical club of Paris is the one formerly known as the Mirlitons, now fused with another, but still carrying its principles into the partnership. The Mirlitons is a club of the united arts. It is for painters, men of letters, and the like. They are not left to their own devices. The committee organise all sorts of entertainments. They hold choice concerts in the season, at which some of the best amateurs in Paris are to be heard. At another time it is a picture exhibition, to which, as to the concerts, members may invite their friends. Now and then you have an amateur dramatic performance, or a great assault-of-arms, which brings together,

as deadly opposites, some of the most noted swordsmen in Paris.

Another variety of appeal to this universal desire for something to do is the dining club. Many Frenchmen who do not need an all-the-year-round club are still glad to meet their friends at intervals of the week, fortnight, or month. The clubs for this purpose are legion, and they need a new directory for every year, for they come and go. They unite men with the same pursuits or the same tastes. They are of all sorts. There is a dining club of men of letters. There are clubs (or there used to be) for the subdivisions of schools, for the Parnassians and for the Plastics, as there was a Boiled Beef Club, for the naturalists, under Zola. Add to these a club for failures in literature, a club for men whose plays have been hissed off the stage, a club for blockheads, clubs for painters, etchers, and so on. Then there are the clubs of provincials—the Club of the Apple, which brings the Normans together, as men from the cider country; the Club of the Cigale, which unites the poets of

Provence; the Celtic Club, at which Renan used often to preside. This is one of the simplest modes of reunion. It entails no cost for premises and but little for management. The members meet at a restaurant, and as they don't have too much of one another they are usually at their best.

The same craving for something to give a pulse to life may largely account for the number of gambling clubs in Paris. There are clubs that are for nothing but gambling, and, apart from these, there is high play at pretty well every institution of the kind. The Frenchman is almost incapable of sitting still, of a state of mere being without doing, in club life. The concentration of baccarat is an agreeable variant of passionless repose. The gambling clubs proper—or improper—take a fine-sounding name, sometimes derived from literature or art, but they are well understood to be simply places for the rigour of the game. They are mostly proprietary, and are magnificently appointed. The owner can afford to do the thing well at a moderate and, indeed, a merely nominal

subscription. A good dinner is supplied at little above cost price. It brings customers to the house, and inspires them with hope for the chances of the green table.

Of course the English variety of club is not unknown. The old-fashioned Union, for instance, is quite as select as Boodle's or White's. It is almost a mark of good form to wear your hat there. You go to the Union as you might go to church. So you do to the Jockey. It has long since got rid of its wildness of youth, when Lord Henry Seymour, a brother of the Marquis of Hertford, was one of its members, and used to drive down in his coach and four, to the edification of the Boulevard. It is exclusive and correct. Its surviving dissipations have a stateliness about them which might almost make them the devotional exercises of any other institution.

All the recreations of society have this note of special adaptation. There is always an attempt to give the turn of taste or of luxury. The inventor of the bran-bath must have been a Frenchman. The very

sports of the field are something of a garden entertainment. If the racing is not quite so serious as it is in England, it is prettier and more comfortable. Still, it is good racing too. Nothing need be better than the great meetings at Chantilly, at Auteuil, at Longchamps, and a dozen other places that might be named. But even there, and I am not saying it in the least in blame, there is still the search for elegance. The stands are more tasteful, the President's box is better, the approaches are better. The French have almost the honour of the invention of the private meeting. They certainly have brought it to its perfection. The scene varies. Sometimes it is La Marche, sometimes the Croix de Berny, sometimes Marly-le-Roi. This amusement they combine with coaching. You are driven down in a party to some delightful little place all among the green trees, and there you have your race all to yourselves, your picnic after, and, perhaps, your dance to follow. The sport is only a *pièce de résistance*, and the true feast is in the side-dishes.

There is a classic simplicity about such things in England which has its charm too, but the world is wide enough for both styles. An English coach drive is a drive in a coach, and there an end. You go a long way, have something to eat in an inn parlour, and come back as you went. The French shorten the drive and lengthen the lunch. When the horses get home they will be put up in crack stables, wonderful to behold. The fittings in German silver, if not in the real article, in patent leather, and in deep-toned mahogany, or what not, are usually covered up, like drawing-room furniture in its chintzes. The horses themselves see so little of these braveries in a general way that they have a tendency to shy at them, on company days, when the cloths are removed. In Baron Hirsch's stables the family colours used to be woven into the very matting which covered the floor. It is so with all French sports—with their polo, for instance, where still they do good work. Compare the polo-ground at Bagatelle for "notions"—as distinct from the

beauty of the scene—with the same thing at Hurlingham or at Ranelagh.

It is the same with the riding. The Row in the Bois is prettier in its surroundings than the Row in Hyde Park. It is more ample, and it commands a finer landscape. The sense of the time of year, spring, summer, or even winter, is more insistent. The personnel may not be quite so impressive as in the Row, but that is another matter. The riding is a little mixed. Everybody thinks himself entitled to have a try. The freedom from fear and trembling with which some Frenchmen will mount a horse must ever cause fear and trembling in the beholder. The beggar on horseback is not half so objectionable as the rich man who has mounted late in life. The park riding is good, but here once more, as in all else, it tends to err on the side of finesse, and to suggest the Hippodrome. There are no better circus-riders in the world. Who but they have taught the horse to waltz and to make his bow? A little of this affectation has crept into the management of the cob.

Finesse! finesse! you find it everywhere—even in the institution of afternoon tea. The bread and butter is a trifle too diaphanous for human nature's daily food. The sense of a religious rite is a little too intrusive. When the French copy the foreigner they copy with the exaggeration of idolatry.

With the Grand Prix the season comes to an end. People then begin to think of flight to the spas, to Marienbad, or to Ischl where they catch a glimpse of the Austrian court, or to Aix-les-Bains and other places at home. Then, too, comes the time for the country houses. The country-house life is highly developed, only less so than in England, and there is everything but liberty. They will "entertain" you morning, noon, and night, and they have yet to acquire the art of letting you alone. There are picnics and excursions all day long, with dances and *jeux de société* at night. It is distracting. Some of the best houses are those associated with the names of the old vineyards, such as the Château Laffitte, the Château d'Yquem,

the Château Margaux, the Cos d'Estournel. The capitalists are gradually buying up these ancient seats and turning them into pleasure-houses, as well as places of business. The vintage pays the piper, and it is also part of the sport. You play at pressing the grapes.

Then apart from all this, or with it, there are the hunting and the shooting. These are serious sports in France, taking the country as a whole, and they are not to be rashly despised by those who are familiar with only the exploits of the cockney sportsman. The hunting of the boar, the hunting of the wolf, are both dangerous, and are associated with fine breeds of hounds. Boar-hunting, in particular, is no joke. The wolf-hunting is simply a scheme for the destruction of vermin. In some parts of the country these marauders are very troublesome to the flocks, and do any amount of damage. Then there is the hunting of the stag, where, once more, the decorative tendency comes in. Their art of hunting is as old as their country. They have given a name to most

of the terms of sport, and they have invented most of the forms and ceremonies. We have all laughed over the great curling horns round the body of the sportsman, but these have their uses at the close of a long run, when you hear them through the silence of the woods and the witchery of the twilight, sounding the death of the stag. It is like something from the tale of Arthur or of Roland. The horns wind for every stage of the process—for the view, for the turn at bay, and, as we have seen, right on to the end. There is quite a rubric for the death, and still another for the distribution of the daintily carved morsels of the quarry among the hounds that have run him down. This is generally done by torchlight, in the courtyard of the château. Another great ceremonial observance is the benediction of the hounds on St. Hubert's Day. This was revived by the Duc d'Aumale when he came back to live at Chantilly, with a determination to revive its glories. All who wore the duke's livery of the chase had to attend a solemn mass, with the pack at the door of

the church, under the eye and whip of the huntsman. At the moment of the elevation of the Host the hounds were expected to bark in chorus, but too often they only howled in sections as they felt the thong. In all this we see the tendency of the French to dramatise everything in life. The English rules of sport are for business; the French for beauty and grace.

These amusements run into money, and so, once more, the rising men of the time, who are the architects of their own fortunes, have their chance. There is no holding them back here, as there is no holding them back anywhere. They buy their way into rich families and into great châteaux. They, and the families into which they buy, make society. Beyond these there is a fringe of betitled impostors. In no other country in the world are there so many dukes, marquises, and counts who can give no intelligible account of their blazon. They form a society of their own. They are on terms of tolerance with one another, for their principle is, "Live and let live." It is understood

that I go on calling you "count" as long as you go on calling me "baron," and no questions asked. Their nutriment is the wild gull from over sea. It is with their aid that the fresh-caught millionaire from Brazil begins to furnish his salon. The house-agent will contract for them at a pinch, as for the chairs and tables. The sham nobility take their seats at the new-comer's board, and if they respect his spoons he may be a long time before he finds out the difference between them and the real article.

A more respectable member of "the fringe" is the broken-down gentleman who has lived in good society, and who, for a variety of possible reasons, has lost his footing. These dejected spirits tend generally to haunt the scenes of former bliss. One of their gathering-places is at the junction of the avenue of the Bois with the Place de l'Etoile. They take their seats there on fine afternoons, to watch the long procession of carriages and live again in their memories of former splendour. The mention of them is not without significance at the end of this

survey. Truly they represent a dead and gone state of things, or, at any rate, a dying one. The fine folks of their memories are really passing away as an order. Fashionable Paris is no longer to be confounded with aristocratic Paris. The two things are separate and distinct. Fashion has outgrown its old bounds of the old families, and aristocracy, as a governing force, has become a mere survival of habit. The two aristocracies, the old and the new, the Legitimist and the Bonapartist — not to speak of the Orleanist, as shoddy as the last — are mutually destructive. As they cannot agree to revere one another, they have helped the crowd to despise them all. A new society has come into power by process of natural change. Education, which is the real basis, is within the reach of all.

Republics must educate or perish. Under this one no nimble spirit need be ignorant for want of the chance of knowledge. There is small difference of opportunity between the duke's son and the cobbler's. Manner is a heritage which the French have in com-

mon. All that remains to win social importance—and I put it last in no paradoxical spirit—is to win wealth. There again, whatever the dignity of the pursuit, the career is at least open. Access to political power is equally a part of the heritage. With this and with wealth, education, and manners, social importance comes at call, and the mere handle to the name becomes a pure superfluity. This is the real meaning of what is now going on in France. The old hereditary sets are being quietly elbowed out of the way by the new claimants for a place in the sun. The big names, as they appear in society journals and in the letters of foreign correspondents, have a quite fictitious importance. Fashionable Paris is now one of the newest things in the place.

THE END

WILLIAM POPE
BRENDON & SON

MURRAY'S IMPERIAL LIBRARY

OF

STANDARD WORKS.

Cloth, Demy 8vo.

THE YANG-TZE VALLEY AND BEYOND. An Account of Journeys in Central and Western China, especially in the Province of Sze-Chuan and among the Man-Tze of the Somo Territory. By Mrs. Bishop (Isabella L. Bird), F.R.G.S. With Map and numerous Illustrations.

EIGHTEEN YEARS IN THE KHYBER. 1879–1898. With Personal Reminiscences of Service in India, and especially among the tribes on our N.W. Frontier. By Colonel Sir Robert Warburton, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., &c. With Map and Illustrations.

THE MAKING OF A FRONTIER. Five Years' Experiences and Adventures in Gilgit, Hunza Nagar, Chitral, and the Eastern Hindu-Kush. By Colonel Algernon Durand, C.B., C.I.E., British Agent at Gilgit, 1889–1894; Military Secretary to the Viceroy of India, 1894–1899. With Portrait, Map, and Illustrations.

AFRICAN INCIDENTS. Personal Experiences in Egypt and Unyoro. By Major A. B. Thruston. With an Introduction by General Sir Archibald Hunter, K.C.B., D.S.O. With a Memoir of the Author by his brother, E. H. Thruston, and an Account of Major Thruston's last stay in 1897 in the Protectorate, his death, and the Mutiny of the Uganda Rifles. With Portrait, Maps and Illustrations from the Author's Sketches.

AT SCHOOL AND AT SEA. Sketches of Life and Character at Harrow in the Forties, and subsequently in the Royal Navy; with Experiences and Adventures on the Australian Station, in the South Seas, in the Black Sea, in the trenches at Sebastopol, &c., &c. By "Martello Tower," a Naval Officer. With Illustrations.

MURRAY'S IMPERIAL LIBRARY

OF

STANDARD WORKS.

Cloth, Demy 8vo.

LUMSDEN OF THE GUIDES. Being a Sketch of the Life of Lieut.-General Sir HARRY BURNETT LUMSDEN, K.C.S.I., C.B., with selections from his Correspondence and Occasional Papers. By General Sir PETER S. LUMSDEN, G.C.B., C.S.I., and GEORGE R. ELSMIE, C.S.I. Including a Record of his Services during the Afghan, Sutlej, Punjab, and Frontier Campaigns, as well as the Raising of the famous Corps of Guides, and Experiences, Military and Political, on the Afghan Frontier before and after the Annexation of the Punjab in 1847. With Portraits, Maps, and Illustrations.

THE LIFE OF JOHN NICHOLSON, Soldier and Administrator. Based on Private and hitherto unpublished Documents. By Captain L. J. TROTTER. With Portraits, Maps, &c.

THE LIFE OF SIR GEORGE POMEROY-COLLEY. 1835–1881. By Lieut.-General Sir WILLIAM F. BUTLER, K.C.B. With Portraits, Maps, and Illustrations.

[Out of print.

LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN HAUGHTON, COMMANDANT OF THE 36th SIKHS; A Hero of Tirah. A Memoir by Major A. C. YATE, 2nd (Duke of Connaught's Own) Baluch Battalion; F.R.G.S.; author of "England and Russia Face to Face in Asia," &c. With Portraits and many Illustrations.

LITTLE FOLKS OF MANY LANDS. An Account of Pickaninnies, Papooses, Bambinos, and other Bairns, chiefly from personal observation. By (Mrs.) LOUISE JORDAN MILN. With many Illustrations.

London: JOHN MURRAY, Albemarle Street, W.

MURRAY'S IMPERIAL LIBRARY

OF

Fiction, Light Literature, &c.

In Cloth and Paper Covers, Crown 8vo.

LESSER DESTINIES. A Novel. By SAMUEL GORDON, author of "A Handful of Exotics," and "In Years of Transition."

UNDER THE SJAMBOK: A Tale of the Transvaal. A Novel. By GEORGE HANSBY RUSSELL.

THE SWORD OF THE KING. A Romance of the time of William of Orange. A Novel. By RONALD MACDONALD.

THE HEART'S HIGHWAY. A Romance of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century. A Novel. By MARY E. WILKINS. With a Frontispiece by F. M. DU MOND.

THE WORLDLINGS. A Novel. By LEONARD MERRICK, author of "The Actor Manager," "One Man's View," &c.

JOHN CHARITY. A Tale of the Early Part of Her Majesty's Reign. A Novel. By HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL, author of "The Procession of Life," &c.

PARSON PETER. A Novel. By ARTHUR H. NORWAY.

ESTHER VANHOMRIGH. A Novel. By Mrs. WOODS.

MARCIA. A Novel. By W. E. NORRIS.

MURRAY'S IMPERIAL LIBRARY

OF

Fiction, Light Literature, &c.

In Cloth and Paper Covers, Crown 8vo.

THE NAVAL PIONEERS OF AUSTRALIA. By LOUIS BECKE and WALTER JEFFERY, authors of "A First Fleet Family," "The Mutineer," &c. With numerous Portraits and Illustrations.

LEADING POINTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY. From 1486 to 30th March, 1900. Chronologically arranged, with a full Classified Date-Index of Events. By EDWIN A. PRATT.

WILL BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY.

A GENTLEMAN. A Novel. By the Honourable Mrs. WALTER FORBES.

A VIZIER'S DAUGHTER. A Tale of the Hazara War. A Novel. By LILLIAS HAMILTON, M.D., some time Medical Adviser to Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan. With Illustrations.

ON THE WING OF OCCASIONS. Stories of the Secret Service in America during the War of 1860-1. A Novel. By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS, the author of "Uncle Remus."

A PRINCESS OF ARCADY. A Novel. By ARTHUR HENRY.

THE LIFE OF PARIS. By RICHARD WHITEING, author of "No. 5, John Street."

A SEA KING'S MIDSHIPMAN. An Episode in the Life of the famous Lord Cochrane (afterwards Lord Dundonald). By A. LEE KNIGHT. With Illustrations by MONRO S. ORR.

A CENTURY OF OUR SEA STORY. By WALTER JEFFERY, author of "The King's Yard," &c. With a Photogravure Frontispiece.

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018